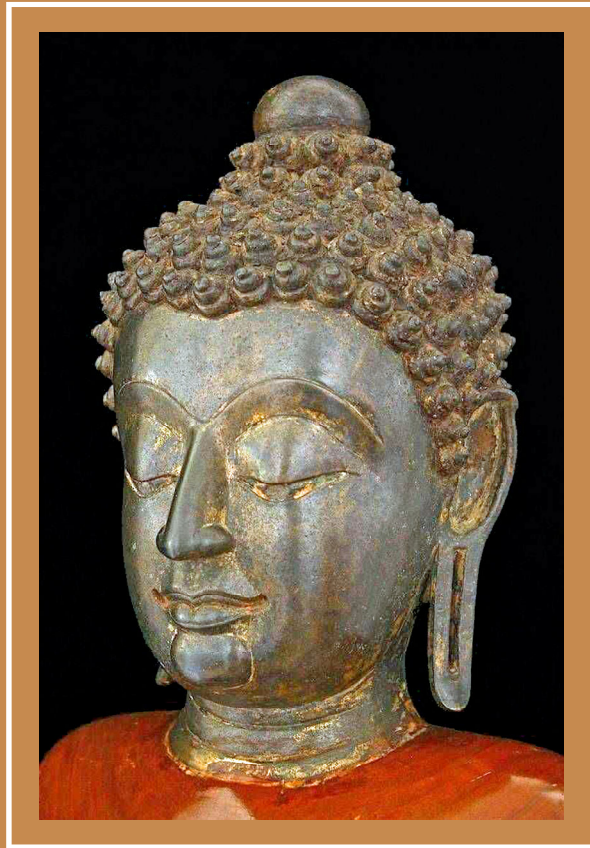


FLORENCE BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

# IN THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA



*Original Authors*

**Nyānatiloka Thera and Ajahn Brahm**

*Revised, edited, and expanded by*

**Allan R. Bomhard**

Basic / Introductory Series



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FLORENCE BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP  
Florence, SC USA

2018 (2562)

*The doctrinal positions expressed in this book are those of Theravādin Buddhism.*

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# Preface

The original version of *The Word of the Buddha* was not intended to be an introduction to the teaching of the Buddha, nor was it intended merely to be read and then laid aside. Its aims were twofold:

1. To provide a systematically arranged outline of the Buddha's teaching (the Dhamma) in His own words for the benefit of those who are already acquainted with the fundamental concepts of the teaching;
2. To bring together the various parts of the teaching so that they converge upon a single point, namely, deliverance from suffering, as expressed by the Buddha Himself: "One thing only, Bhikkhus, do I make known: suffering and deliverance from suffering."

The original compilation was prepared by Nyānatiloka Thera and subsequently updated with translations from Bhikkhu Bodhi and reformatted by Ajahn Brahm. The present version has been revised, edited, and expanded by Allan R. Bomhard, and the title has been changed to *In the Words of the Buddha*.





# 1

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## The Four Noble Truths

DN 16      Then, the Lord addressed the Bhikkhus thus: “It is through not penetrating and not waking up to the Four Noble Truths (Ariya-Sacca) that I, as well as you, have for a long time fared on and on through the cycle of rebirth-and-death (saṃsāra). What are they? By not waking up to the Noble Truths of (1) Suffering (dukkha), (2) the Origin of Suffering (samudaya), (3) the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha), and (4) the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga), we have fared on and on through the cycle of rebirth-and-death.”

SN 56.11      “So long as my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment (bodhi) in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and Brahmins, its devas and humans. But when my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and Brahmins, its devas and humans.”

MN 26      I considered thus: “This Dhamma that I have attained is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. But this generation delights in worldly pleasures, rejoices in worldly pleasures, is attached to worldly pleasures. It is hard for such a generation to see this truth, namely, specific conditionality, dependent origination (paṭiccasamuppāda). And it is hard to see this truth, namely, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving (taṇhā), fading away, cessation, nibbāna.”

There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are wasting through not hearing the Dhamma. There will be those who will understand the Dhamma.

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- Nyanatiloka's  
Commentary
1. The first truth, briefly stated, teaches that all forms of existence whatsoever are unsatisfactory and subject to suffering (dukkha).
  2. The second truth teaches that all suffering, and all rebirth, is produced by craving (taṇhā).
  3. The third truth teaches that the extinction (nirodha) of craving necessarily results in the extinction of rebirth and suffering, i.e. nibbāna.
  4. The fourth truth of the eightfold path (magga) indicates the means by which this extinction is attained.

In the Buddha's first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, it is said that the first truth (suffering) is to be fully understood; the second truth (craving) is to be abandoned; the third truth (nibbāna) is to be realized; and the fourth truth (the path) is to be cultivated.

The truth of suffering is to be compared with a disease, the truth of the origin of suffering with the cause of the disease, the truth of the extinction of suffering with the cure of the disease, the truth of the path [leading to the extinction of suffering] with the medicine.

In the ultimate sense, all these four truths are to be considered as empty of a Self, since there is no feeling agent, no doer, no liberated one, no one who follows along the path.

It must be pointed out that the first truth does not merely refer to actual suffering, i.e. to suffering as feeling, but that it shows that, in consequence of the universal law of impermanency, all the phenomena of existence whatsoever, even the sublimest states of existence, are subject to change and dissolution, and hence are miserable and unsatisfactory; and that thus, without exception, they all contain in themselves the germ of suffering.

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## The First Noble Truth: Suffering

DN 22

And what is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Rebirth is suffering; aging is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and despair are suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not getting what one wants is suffering. In short, the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*) are suffering.

And what is rebirth? In whatever beings, of whatever species of beings, there is rebirth, coming-to-be, coming forth, the appearance of the aggregates, the acquisition of the sense-bases, that is called rebirth.

And what is aging? In whatever beings, of whatever species of beings, there is growing old, decrepitude, broken teeth, gray hair, wrinkled skin, shrinking with age, decay of the sense-faculties, that is called aging.

And what is death? In whatever beings, of whatever species of beings, there is a passing-away, a removal, a cutting-off, a disappearance, a demise, a dying, an ending, a cutting-off of the aggregates, a discarding of the body, that is called death.

And what is sorrow? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature, anguish, mourning, distress, inward grief, inward woe, that is called sorrow.

And what is lamentation? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature and there is crying out, weeping, making much noise for grief, wailing, that is called lamentation.

And what is pain? Whatever bodily painful feeling, bodily unpleasant feeling, painful or unpleasant feeling resulting from physical contact, that is called pain.

And what is sadness? Whatever mental painful feeling, mental unpleasant feeling, painful or unpleasant sensation resulting from mental contact, that is called sadness.

And what is despair? Whenever, by any kind of misfortune, anyone is affected by something of a painful nature, dejection and desolation, despondency and hopelessness, that is called despair.

And what is union with what is displeasing? Here, whoever encounters unwanted, disliked, unpleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, or mind-objects, or whoever encounters ill-wishers, wishers of harm, of discomfort, of insecurity, with whom they have concourse, intercourse, connection, union, that is called union with what is displeasing.

And what is separation from what is pleasing? Here, whoever encounters what is wanted, liked, pleasant sight-objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, or mind-objects, or whoever encounters well-wishers, wishers of good, of comfort, of security, mother or father or brother or sister or younger kinsmen or friends or colleagues or blood-relations, and then is deprived of such concourse, interaction, connection, or union, that is called separation from what is pleasing.

And what is not getting what one wants? In beings subject to birth, this wish arises: “Oh that we were not subject to birth, that we might not be reborn!” But this cannot be gained by wishing. That is not getting what one wants. In beings subject to aging, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and despair, this wish arises: “Oh that we were not subject to aging, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and despair, that we might not come to these things!” But this cannot be gained by wishing. That is not getting what one wants.

### **The Five Aggregates of Clinging (Upādānakkhandha)**

- DN 22      And how, in particular, are the five aggregates (pañcakkhandhā) suffering? They are as follows: (1) the form aggregate (rūpakkhandha), (2) the feeling aggregate (vedanākkhandha), (3) the perception aggregate (saññākkhandha), (4) the [predisposing] mental formations aggregate (saṃkhārakkhandha), and (5) the consciousness aggregate (viññāṇakkhandha) — these are the five aggregates that are suffering. And that is called the Noble Truth of Suffering.
- MN 44      Is that clinging (upādāna) the same as these five aggregates, or is the clinging something apart from the five aggregates? The clinging is neither the same as the five aggregates, nor is the clinging separate from the five aggregates. It is the desire for gratification of the senses and wanting in regard to these five aggregates that is the clinging therein.
- MN 109      Any kind of form (rūpa) whatever, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — this is the form aggregate. Any kind of feeling (vedanā) whatever, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior far or near — this is the feeling aggregate. Any kind of perception (saññā) whatever, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior far or near — this is the perception aggregate. Any kind of mental formations (saṃkhāra) whatever, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — this is the mental formations aggregate. Any kind of consciousness (viññāṇa) whatever, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior far or near — this is the consciousness aggregate.

Nyanatiloka's  
Commentary

What is called individual existence is in reality nothing but a mere process of those mental and physical phenomena, a process that since time immemorial has been going on, and that also after death will still continue for unthinkably long periods of time. These five aggregates, however, neither singly nor collectively constitute any self-dependent real ego entity, or personality (*attā*), nor is there to be found any such entity apart from them. Hence the belief in such an ego-entity or personality, as real in the ultimate sense, proves [to be] a mere illusion ...

The fact ought to be emphasized here that these five aggregates, correctly speaking, merely form an abstract classification by the Buddha, but they as such, i.e. as just these five complete aggregates, have no real existence, since only single representatives of these aggregates, mostly variable, can arise with any state of consciousness.

### The Aggregate of Form (*Rūpa*)

MN 28

And what is the form aggregate? It is the four great elements (*dhātu*) and the form derived from the four great elements.

And what are the four great elements? They are: (1) the earth element [solidity] (*paṭhavī-dhātu*), (2) the water element [cohesion, liquidity] (*āpo-dhātu*), (3) the heat or fire element [temperature] (*tejo-dhātu*), and (4) the air or wind element [motion] (*vāyo-dhātu*).

What is the earth element? The earth element may be either internal or external. What is the internal earth element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to; that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, muscles, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, stomach, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to — this is called the internal earth element. Now, both the internal earth element and the external earth element are simply earth element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.”

What is the water element? The water element may be either internal or external. What is the internal water element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to; that is, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is water, liquid, and clung-to — this is called the internal water element. Now, both the internal water element and the external water element are simply water element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.”

What is the fire element? The fire element may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is

fire, fiery, and clung-to; that is, that by which one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to — this is called the internal fire element. Now, both the internal fire element and the external fire element are simply fire element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.”

What is the air element? The air element may be either internal or external. What is the internal air element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to; that is, up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the belly, winds in the bowels, winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to — this is called the internal air element. Now, both the internal air element and the external air element are simply air element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.”

Just as when a space is enclosed by timber and creepers, grass, and clay, it comes to be termed just “house,” so too, when a space is enclosed by bones and sinews, flesh and skin, it comes to be termed just “body.”

### **The Aggregate of Feeling (Vedanā)**

SN 36.1      There are these three types of vedanā. What three? (1) Pleasurable experience through any of the six senses; (2) unpleasant experience through any of the six senses; (3) neither-pleasant-nor-painful experience through any of the six senses. These are the three [types of] vedanā.

### **The Aggregate of Perception (Saññā)**

SN 22.56      And what is perception? There are these six classes of perception: (1) perception of forms, (2) perception of sounds, (3) perception of odors, (4) perception of tastes, (5) perception of touches, and (6) perception of mental objects.

### **The Aggregate of Mental Formations (Saṁkhāra)**

SN 22.56      And what are [predisposing] mental formations? There are these six classes of volition: (1) volition regarding sights, (2) volition regarding sounds, (3) volition regarding odors, (4) volition regarding tastes, (5) volition regarding touch, and (6) volition regarding mental objects.



## The Aggregate of Consciousness (Viññāṇa)

- SN 22.56 And what is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: (1) eye consciousness, (2) ear consciousness, (3) smell consciousness, (4) tongue consciousness, (5) body consciousness, and (6) mind consciousness.

## Dependent Origination of Consciousness

- MN 28 If the sense of sight is intact but no external forms come into its range, and there is no engagement, then there is no manifestation of eye consciousness. If the sense of sight is intact and external forms come into its range, but there is no engagement, then there is no manifestation of eye consciousness. But when the sense of sight is intact and external forms come into its range and there is engagement, then there is the manifestation of eye consciousness. And so with the other five senses.

Consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises. When consciousness arises dependent on sight and forms, it is reckoned as eye (cakkhu) consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on hearing and sounds, it is reckoned as ear (sota) consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on smell and odors, it is reckoned as smell [olfactory] (ghāna) consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on the taste and flavors, it is reckoned as tongue (jihvā) consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on touch and tangibles, it is reckoned as body (kāya) consciousness; when consciousness arises dependent on the mind and mind objects, it is reckoned as mind (mano) consciousness.

Whatever there is of “form” [materiality] (rūpa), on that occasion, this belongs to the aggregate of form. Whatever there is of “feeling” [sensation] (vedanā), this belongs to the aggregate of feeling. Whatever there is of “perception” (saññā), this belongs to the aggregate of perception. Whatever there are of “mental formations” (saṃkhāra), these belong to the aggregate of mental formations. Whatever there is of “consciousness” (viññāṇa), this belongs to the aggregate of consciousness.

## Dependency of Consciousness

- SN 22.53 Though someone might say: “Apart from form, apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from volitional formations, I will make known the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rebirth, its growth, increase, and expansion” — that is impossible.
- SN 12.67 Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with the objects of consciousness (nāma-rūpa) as a condition, consciousness comes

to be; with consciousness as a condition, the objects of consciousness come to be .... If one were to remove one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall. So too, with the cessation of consciousness, the objects of consciousness cease to exist, with the cessation of the objects of consciousness, consciousness ceases to exist.

## The Three Characteristics of Existence

Dhp 277—279 All conditioned phenomena are impermanent (anicca) ...  
All conditioned phenomena have suffering (dukkha) as their nature ...  
All phenomena are without Self (anattā).

SN 22.59 “What do you think? Is form permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, Venerable Sir.” — “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” — “Suffering, Venerable Sir.” — “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self’?” — “No, Venerable Sir.” “Is feeling permanent or impermanent?... Is perception permanent or impermanent?... Are volitional formations permanent or impermanent?... Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, Venerable Sir.” — “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” — “Suffering, Venerable Sir.” — “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my Self’?” — “No, Venerable Sir.”

Therefore, any kind of form whatsoever, whether past, present, or future, your own or others, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all form should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.” Any kind of vedanā whatsoever, whether past, present, or future, your own or others, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all vedanā should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.” Any kind of perception whatsoever, whether past, present, or future, your own or others, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all perception should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.” Any kind of volitional formations whatsoever, whether past, present, or future, your own or others, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all volitional formations should be seen as they really are with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.” Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, present, or future, your own or others, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all consciousness should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my Self.”

## The Anattā Doctrine

SN 22.95      Suppose that this River Ganges were carrying along a great mass of foam. A man with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a mass of foam? So too, whatever kind of form there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a Bhikkhu inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in form?

Suppose that in the autumn, when it is raining and big rain drops are falling, a water bubble arises and bursts on the surface of the water. A man with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a water bubble? So too, whatever kind of *vedanā* there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a Bhikkhu inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in *vedanā*?

Suppose that in the last month of the hot season, at high noon, a shimmering mirage appears. A man with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a mirage? So too, whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a Bhikkhu inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in perception?

Suppose that a man needing heartwood, seeking heartwood, wandering in search of heartwood, would take a sharp axe and enter a forest. There, he would see the trunk of a large plantain tree, straight, fresh, without a fruit-bud core. He would cut it down at the root, cut off the crown, and unroll the coil. As he unrolls the coil, he would not find even softwood, let alone heartwood. A man with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in the trunk of a plantain tree? So too, whatever kind of volitional formations there are, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a Bhikkhu inspects them, ponders them, and carefully investigates them. As he investigates them, they appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in volitional formations?

Suppose that a magician or a magician's apprentice would display a magical illusion at a crossroads. A man with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a magical illusion? So too, whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, a Bhikkhu inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to him to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in consciousness?

SN 22.29      One who seeks delight in form seeks delight in suffering. One who seeks delight in suffering, I say, is not freed from suffering. One who seeks delight in vedanā seeks delight in suffering ... in perception seeks delight in suffering ... in volitional formations seeks delight in suffering ... in consciousness seeks delight in suffering. One who seeks delight in suffering, I say, is not freed from suffering.

Dhp 146—148      Why is there laughter, why is there merriment, when this world is on fire? When you are living in darkness, why do you not look for light?

Behold this lovely body, this mass of sores, supported by bones, subject to illness, highly thought of. Indeed, this body is neither permanent nor enduring.

Quite worn out is this body, a nest for disease, subject to decay. This putrid body will eventually disintegrate — life, indeed, ends with death.

## The Three Warnings

AN 3.36      But, good man, did you not ever see among human beings a man or a woman, eighty, ninety, or a hundred years of age, frail, bent like a roof bracket, crooked, wobbling as they go along leaning on a stick, ailing, youth gone, with broken teeth, with gray and scanty hair or bald, with wrinkled skin and blotched limbs?

Good man, did it not occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: “I too am subject to old age, I am not exempt from old age. Let me now do good by body, speech, and mind?”

But, good man, did you not ever see among human beings a man or a woman, sick, afflicted, gravely ill, lying in his own urine and excrement, having to be lifted up by some and put down by others?

Good man, did it not occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: “I too am subject to illness, I am not exempt from illness. Let me now do good by body, speech, and mind?”

But, good man, did you not ever see among human beings a man or a woman, one, two, or three days dead, the corpse bloated, livid, and festering?

Good man, did it not occur to you, an intelligent and mature person: “I too am subject to death, I am not exempt from death. Let me now do good by body, speech, and mind?”

## Saṃsāra

SN 15.3      This saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings roaming and wandering on hindered by ignorance (avijjā) and fettered by craving (taṇhā).

What do you think? Which is more, the stream of tears that you have shed as you roamed and wandered on through this long course, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable — this, or the water in the four great oceans?

For a long time, you have experienced the death of a mother ... the death of a father ... the death of a brother ... the death of a sister ... the death of a son ... the death of a daughter ... the loss of relatives ... the loss of wealth ... loss through illness; as you have experienced this, weeping and wailing because of being united with the disagreeable and separated from the agreeable, the stream of tears that you have shed is more than the water in the four great oceans.

Which do you think is more? The streams of blood that you have shed when you were murdered as you roamed and wandered on through this long course — this or the water in the four great oceans?

For a long time, you have been arrested as burglars, thieves, and adulterers, and when you were executed [for your crimes], the stream of blood that you shed is greater than the water in the four great oceans.

For what reason? Because this saṃsāra is without discoverable beginning. No first beginning is found of beings who, obstructed by craving and fettered by delusion, are hurrying through this round of rebirths.

SN 15.1      For such a long time, you have experienced suffering, anguish, and disaster, and swelled the cemetery with the bones from your many lives. It is enough to experience revulsion towards all formations, enough to become dispassionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.

## The Second Noble Truth: The Origin of Suffering

### The Threefold Craving

SN 56.11      Now, this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving (*taṇhā*) which leads to rebirth, accompanied by enjoyment and wanting, seeking delight now here now there; that is, craving for gratification of the senses (*kāma-taṇhā*), craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*), craving for non-existence (*vibhava-taṇhā*).

### The Origin of Craving

DN 22      And where does this craving arise and establish itself? Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there does this craving arise and establish itself.

Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles, and mind objects are agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. Eye consciousness, ear consciousness, smell consciousness, taste consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness are agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. Sight contact, sound contact, smell contact, taste contact, body contact, and mind contact are agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. *Vedanā* born of sight contact, hearing contact, smell contact, taste contact, body contact, and mind contact are agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself.

The perception of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects is agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. Volition in regard to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects is agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. The craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects is agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. Thinking of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects is agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. Pondering on sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and mind objects is agreeable and pleasurable in the world, and there does this craving arise and establish itself. And that is called the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

## Dependent Origination of All Phenomena

MN 38      On seeing a sight, one wants it if it is pleasurable; one tries to get rid of it if it is painful. One thus lives one's day-to-day life without mindfulness (*sati*), with a limited mind, and does not understand, as it actually is, the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom wherein those evil unwholesome mental states cease without remainder. Engaged as one is in liking or disliking, cherishing or rejecting, whatever feeling (*vedanā*) one experiences — whether pleasant or painful or neither-pleasant-nor-painful — one delights in that feeling, welcomes it, and remains holding on to it. As one does so, delight arises in them. Now, delight in feelings is a clinging (*upādāna*). With one's clinging as condition, being [comes to be]; with being as condition, rebirth [comes to be]; with rebirth as condition, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

## Present Kamma-Result

MN 13      Again, with the five senses as the cause, the five senses as the source, the five senses as the basis, the cause being simply the five senses, kings quarrel with kings, nobles with nobles, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders; mother quarrels with son, son with mother, father with son, son with father; brother quarrels with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. And here in their quarrels, brawls, and disputes, they attack each other with fists, clubs, sticks, or knives, whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now, this too is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering here and now ... the cause being simply the five senses.

Again, with the five senses as the cause ... men break into houses, plunder wealth, commit burglary, steal and defraud, seduce others' wives, and when they are caught, the authorities have many kinds of punishment inflicted on them. The authorities have them flogged with whips, beaten with canes, beaten with clubs; they have their hands cut off, their feet cut off, their hands and feet cut off; their ears cut off, their noses cut off, their ears and noses cut off; they have them subjected to the "porridge pot," to the "polished-shell shave," to the "Rāhu's mouth," ... and they have them splashed with boiling oil, and they have them thrown to be devoured by dogs, and they have them impaled alive on stakes, and they have their heads cut off with swords — whereby they incur death or deadly suffering. Now, this too is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering here and now ... the cause being simply the five senses.

## Future Kamma-Result

MN 13            Again, with the five senses as the cause, the five senses as the source, the five senses as the basis, the cause being simply the five senses, people indulge in bad behavior, wrongdoing, misconduct of body, speech, and mind. Having done so, on the dissolution of the body after death, they reappear in states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell. Now, this is a danger in the case of the five senses, a mass of suffering in the life to come, having the five senses as its cause, the five senses as its source, the five senses as its basis, the cause being simply the five senses.

Dhp 127—128   Not in the sky, nor in the middle of the ocean, nor in mountain canyons, nor anywhere else in the world is there a place where one can escape from the consequences of one's evil deeds.

Not in the sky, nor in the ocean, nor in mountain canyons, nor anywhere else in the world is there a place where one can hide from death.

## Kamma as Volition

AN 6.63            “Volition (*cetanā*) is what I call kamma.” For having willed, one acts by body (*kāya-kamma*), speech (*vacī-kamma*), or mind (*mano-kamma*).

And what is the source and origin of kamma? Contact (*phassa*) is its source and origin.

And what is the diversity of kamma? There is kamma that ripens in the hell realms; there is kamma that ripens in the animal realm; there is kamma that ripens in the realm of afflicted spirits (*petas*); there is kamma that ripens in the human world; and there is kamma that ripens in the deva world. This is called the diversity of kamma.

And what is the fruit or result (*vipāka*) of kamma? The result of kamma, I say, is threefold: [ripening] (1) in this very life, or (2) in the next life, or (3) in some subsequent life. This is called the result of kamma.

## Inheritance of Deeds

AN 10.216        Beings are the owners of their kamma, the heirs of their kamma; they have kamma as their origin, kamma as their relative, kamma as their resort; whatever kamma they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.

AN 3.34            Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that one experiences its result, either in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent life.



SN 22.99      There will come a time, when the great ocean dries up and evaporates and no longer exists, but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming and wandering on blinded by delusion and fettered by craving.

There will come a time, when Sineru, the king of mountains, disintegrates and perishes and no longer exists, but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming and wandering on blinded by delusion and fettered by craving.

There will come a time, when the great earth disintegrates and perishes and no longer exists, but still, I say, there is no making an end of suffering for those beings roaming and wandering on blinded by delusion and fettered by craving.

## The Third Noble Truth: The Cessation of Suffering

### Cessation of Craving

- SN 56.11      Now, this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving [craving for gratification of the senses, craving for existence, craving for non-existence], the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, never letting it settle.
- DN 22          Wherever in the world there is anything agreeable and pleasurable, there its cessation comes about. And what is there in the world that is agreeable and pleasurable? Sight in the world is agreeable and pleasurable; hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking in the world are agreeable and pleasurable, and there this craving comes to be abandoned, there its cessation comes about.
- SN 12.66      Those ascetics and Brahmins in the past who regarded pleasant and agreeable things in the world as impermanent (*anicca*), as suffering (*dukkha*), as non-self (*anattā*), as a disease, as fearful — they abandoned craving. In abandoning craving, they abandoned acquisition. In abandoning acquisition, they abandoned suffering. In abandoning suffering, they were freed from birth, aging, and death; they were freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; they were freed from suffering.

### Dependent Cessation of all Phenomena

- SN 12.43      But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving (*taṇhā*) comes cessation of clinging (*upādāna*); with the cessation of clinging, cessation of existence (*bhava*); with the cessation of existence, cessation of rebirth (*paṭisandhi*); with the cessation of rebirth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. This is the passing away of suffering.
- SN 22.30      The arising, continuation, production, and manifestation of form is the arising of suffering, the continuation of disease, the manifestation of aging and death. The arising of feeling (*vedanā*) ... of perception ... of volitional formations ... of consciousness is the arising of suffering, the continuation of disease, the manifestation of aging and death.
- The cessation, subsiding, and passing away of form ... of *vedanā* ... of perception ... of volitional formations ... of consciousness ... is the cessation of suffering, the subsiding of disease, the passing away of aging and death.

## Nibbāna

- AN 3.32 This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling (*samatha*) of all activities (*saṃkhara*), the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, fading away, cessation, *nibbāna*.
- AN 3.55 (1) Excited by greed (*lobha*), overcome by greed ... (2) full of hatred (*dosa*), overcome by hatred ... (3) deluded, overcome by delusion (*moha*), with mind obsessed by it, one reflects on one's own misfortune, on the misfortune of others, or on the misfortune of both, and one experiences mental suffering and depression. But when greed, hatred, and delusion are abandoned, one does not reflect on one's own misfortune, on the misfortune of others, or on the misfortune of both, and one does not experience mental suffering and depression. It is in this way that *nibbāna* is directly visible.
- SN 38.1 The destruction of greed, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion: this is called *nibbāna*.
- Ud 8.3 There is, Bhikkhus, an unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unconditioned state. If, Bhikkhus, there were not this unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unconditioned, an escape from the born, originated, made, and conditioned would not be possible. Inasmuch as there is an unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unconditioned state, an escape from the born, originated, made, and conditioned is possible.
- Itv 2.16—13 The born, become, produced, compounded, made, and, thus, not lasting, but of birth and death, an aggregate, a nest of sickness, brittle, a thing supported by food, come to be, is not a fit thing to take delight in; the escape therefrom, the real, beyond the scope of reason, lasting, unborn, unproduced, the sorrowless, the stainless path that ends the things of woe, the peace from worries, is bliss.

## The Arahant

- AN 6.55 If one is intent on the destruction of craving and the non-confusion of mind — when one sees the arising of the sense bases, one's mind is completely liberated. For a Bhikkhu of peaceful mind, one completely liberated, there is nothing further to be done, no [need to] increase what has been done.
- As a stone mountain, one solid mass, is not stirred by the wind, so no sights, sounds, odors, tastes, touches, or mind objects, desirable or undesirable, stir the stability of his mind. His mind is steady and freed, and he observes its vanishing.

- Snp 1048      And he who has considered all the contrasts on this earth,  
And is no more disturbed by anything whatsoever in the world,  
The peaceful One, freed from rage,  
From sorrow, and from longing,  
He has passed beyond rebirth and decay.
- SN 5.10      By whom has this being been created? Where is the maker of this being? Where  
has this being arisen? Where does this being cease?" Asks Māra.
- The Bhikkhunī Arahant, Vajirā, replies:
- Why now do you assume "a being?" Māra, is that your wrong view? This is just  
a heap of saṃkhāras [conditioned phenomena]. Here, no being is found.
- Just as with a coming together of parts, the word "vehicle" is used. So, when the  
five aggregates exist, there is the conventional term "a being".
- It is only dukkha [suffering] that comes to be, dukkha that stands and dukkha  
that falls away. Nothing but dukkha comes to be. Nothing but dukkha ceases.
- Dhp 90—99      They have completed their journey; they are freed from sorrow and from all  
else. The bonds of life have fallen from them, and the fever [of passions] no  
longer exists in them.
- The thoughtful strive diligently. They take no delight in home-life, but forsake  
home after home, as swans leave the lake.
- Arahants accumulate nothing. When taking food, they reflect over it with full  
understanding of its nature. Their sole goal is liberation, which is void and  
signless. Like the flight of birds in the sky, their path cannot be traced.
- Arahants are free from cankers; they are not attached to food. Their sole goal is  
liberation, which is void and signless. Like the flight of birds in the sky, their  
path cannot be traced.
- Even the gods cherish such steadfast ones, whose sense faculties are calm, like  
horses well-trained by charioteers, and who are free from pride and cankers.
- Like the earth, Arahants are patient and cannot be provoked to respond in anger.  
They stand firm and steady, like a column. They are serene and pure, like a lake  
without mud. They are free from the cycle of birth and death.
- Wisdom has stilled their minds, and their thoughts, words, and deeds are filled  
with peace. Truly knowing the Dhamma, they are free from moral defilements  
and are unperturbed by the ups and downs of life.
- Those who are not credulous, who have realized the unconditioned, who have  
cut off the links of the round of rebirths, who have destroyed all consequences

of good and bad deeds, who have discarded all craving, are indeed the noblest of all.

They make holy wherever they dwell, in a village or a forest, in a valley or on a hill.

With their senses at peace and their minds full of joy, they take delight in secluded forests, where worldlings are loath to go.

# The Fourth Noble Truth: The Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering

## The Noble Eightfold Path

SN 56.11      The pursuit of happiness through the five senses, which is low (*hīna*), vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of practices that fatigue oneself, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without going to either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the Middle Way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct understanding, to enlightenment, to nibbāna.

It is this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, (1) right understanding, (2) right thought (right intention), (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration. This is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct understanding, to enlightenment, to nibbāna.

MN 139      The pursuit of pleasure that is linked to the five senses — low, vulgar, coarse, ignoble, and unbeneficial — is a state beset by suffering, vexation, despair, and fever, and it is the wrong way. Disengagement from the pursuit of pleasure that is linked to the five senses — low, vulgar, coarse, ignoble, and unbeneficial — is a state without suffering, vexation, despair, and fever, and it is the right way.

Dhp 273—276      Of paths, the eightfold is the best; of truths, the noble four are best; of mental states, detachment is the best; of human beings, the All-Seeing One is the best.

This is the only path; there is no other that leads to the purification of vision. Follow this path — it will bewilder Māra.

This path will lead to the end of suffering. This is the path I made known after the arrows of sorrow fell away.

All the effort must be made by you; the Tathāgatas can only show the way. Those who enter this path and practice meditation are freed from the bond of Māra.

MN 26      Listen, the end of dying has been reached. I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dhamma. Practicing as you are instructed, by realizing for yourselves in this very life through direct understanding, you will soon enter upon and abide in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which people rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness.

## 1. Right Understanding

What, now, is right understanding [right view] (*sammādiṭṭhi*)?

### Understanding the Four Noble Truths

DN 22 It is the understanding of suffering, the understanding of the origin of suffering, the understanding of the cessation of suffering, and the understanding of the way of practice leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called right view.

### The Skillful and Unskillful

DN 22 And what is the unskillful, what is the root of the unskillful, what is the skillful, what is the root of the skillful?

Killing living beings is unskillful; stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, malicious gossip, harsh speech, useless talk, greed, ill-will, and wrong view — these are unskillful. Greed, hatred, and delusion — these are the roots of the unskillful.

MN 9 And what is the skillful and the root of the skillful? Abstaining from killing living beings is skillful; abstaining from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, from malicious gossip, from harsh speech, and from useless speech is skillful; contentment is skillful; loving-kindness is skillful; right view is skillful. Renunciation, kindness, and wisdom — these are the roots of the skillful.

### The Three Characteristics

SN 22.51 A Bhikkhu regards form, which is impermanent, suffering, and non-self, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. He regards *vedanā*, which is impermanent suffering, and non-self, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. He regards perception, which is impermanent, suffering, and non-self, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. He regards volitional formations, which are impermanent, suffering, and non-self, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. He regards consciousness, which is impermanent, suffering, and non-self, as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. That is right view.

### Unprofitable Questions

MN 63 If anyone should say thus: “I will not lead the holy life under the Buddha until the Buddha declares to me ‘The universe is eternal’ or ‘The universe is not eternal’; or ‘The universe is finite’ or ‘The universe is infinite’; or ‘The soul and the body are the same’ or ‘The soul is one thing, the body is another’; or ‘The Buddha persists after death,’ or ‘The Buddha does not persist after death,’ or ‘The Buddha both persists and does not persist after death,’ or ‘The Buddha neither persists nor does not persist after death’.” [All] that would still remain undeclared by the Buddha, and meanwhile that person would die.

Suppose a man were wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and relatives brought a doctor to treat him. Suppose the man would say: “I will not let the doctor pull out this arrow until I know whether the man who wounded me was a noble or a Brahmin or a merchant or a worker.” And suppose he would say: “I will not let the doctor pull out this arrow until I know the name and ethnicity of the man who wounded me; ... until I know whether the man who wounded me was tall or short or of middle height; ... until I know whether the man who wounded me was dark or brown or golden-skinned; ... until I know whether the man who wounded me lives in such a village or town or city; ...” All this would still not be known to that man, and meanwhile he would die.

Snp 592      Therefore, those who seek their own welfare should pull out this arrow — this arrow of lamentation, pain, and suffering.

MN 63      If there is the view “the universe is eternal,” the holy life cannot be lived [there is no end of you]; and if there is the view “the universe is not eternal,” the holy life cannot be lived [you are going to end anyway]. Whether there is the view “the universe is eternal” or the view “the universe is not eternal,” there is rebirth, there is aging, there is death, there are sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, the destruction of which I prescribe here and now.

### **The Five Fetters**

MN 64      Here, an uninstructed worldling (*puthujjana*), who has no regard for noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in the Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in the Dhamma, abides with a mind obsessed and enslaved by a view of a soul, and does not understand, as it actually is, the escape from the arisen view of a soul; and when that view of a soul has become habitual and is uneradicated in him, it is a lower fetter. He abides with a mind obsessed and enslaved by skeptical doubt ... by belief that rites and rituals [are sufficient in themselves to reach enlightenment] ... by desire for gratification of the five senses ... by ill-will, and he does not understand, as it actually is, the escape from these states; and when these states have become habitual and are uneradicated in him, they are the five lower fetters (*saṃyojana*).

### **Unwise Considerations (Ayoniso Manasikāra)**

MN 2      Here, an uninstructed worldling does not understand what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. Since that is so, he attends to those things unfit for attention and he does not attend to those things fit for attention.

This is how he attends unwisely: “Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what did I



become in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I become in the future?” Or else, he is inwardly perplexed about the present thus: “Am I? Am I not? Who am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where will it go?”

### The Six Views about the Soul

MN 22

When he attends unwisely in this way, one of six views arises in him. The view (1) “I have a soul” arises in him as true and established; or the view (2) “I have no soul” arises in him as true and established; or the view (3) “I know the soul with a soul” [“I think, therefore I am” — *cōgitō, ergō sum*] arises in him as true and established; or the view (4) “I perceive there is no soul with a soul” arises in him as true and established; or the view (5) “I perceive a soul with what is without a soul” arises in him as true and established; or else, he has some such view as this: (6) “It is this soul of mine that speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions; but this soul of mine is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and it will endure as long as eternity.”

“If there were a soul, would there be attributes of a soul?” “Yes, Venerable Sir.” “Or if there were attributes of a soul, would there be a soul?” “Yes, Venerable Sir.” — “Since a soul and any attributes of a soul are not apprehended as true and established, then this standpoint for views, namely, ‘This is the soul, this is the world; after death I shall be permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change; I shall endure as long as eternity’ — would it not be an utterly and completely foolish belief?”

Such speculative views are called the thicket of views, the wilderness of views, the contortion of views, the vacillation of views, the fetter of views. Fettered by the thicket of views, the untaught ordinary person is not freed from birth, aging, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair; he is not freed from suffering, I say.

SN 12.61

Bhikkhus, the uninstructed worldling might turn away from this body, let it fade away and be liberated from it. Why? Because growth and decay are seen in this body, and it is born and dies. But, Bhikkhus, that which is called “mind” or “mentality” or “consciousness”, the uninstructed worldling is unable to turn away from it, let it fade away and be liberated from it. Why? Because for a long time, this has been held to by him, appropriated and grasped thus: “This ‘citta’, ‘mind’, or ‘consciousness’, whatever you call it, is mine, this I am, this is my Self.”

MN 72

“What do you think, Vaccha? Suppose a fire was burning in front of you, would you know that a fire was burning in front of you?” “Yes, Master Gotama.” “If someone asked you ‘What does this fire burn in dependence on?’, how would

you answer?” “I would answer that the fire was burning in dependence on the fuel of grass and sticks”. “If the fire were extinguished (*nibbuto*), would you know that the fire was extinguished?” “Yes, Master Gotama.” “If someone asked you where that fire went when it was extinguished: Did it go to the East, West, North, or South? How would you answer?” “That question does not apply, Master Gotama. That fire burned in dependence on its fuel of grass and sticks. When that was used up, not getting any more fuel, it is reckoned as extinguished.” “So too, *Vaccha*, ... whether an Enlightened One exists after death; does not exist after death; both exists and does not exist after death; neither exists nor does not exist after death — these questions do not apply.”

### **Wise Considerations (*Yoniso Manasikāra*)**

MN 2 Well-taught noble disciples, who have regard for noble ones (*ariyapuggala*) and are skilled and disciplined in the Dhamma, who have regard for true men and are skilled and disciplined in the Dhamma, understand what things are fit for attention and what things are unfit for attention. Since that is so, they do not attend to those things unfit for attention, and they attend to those things fit for attention.

They attend wisely: “This is suffering”; they attend wisely: “This is the origin of suffering”; they attend wisely: “This is the cessation of suffering”; they attend wisely: “This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.”

Dhp 50—52 Do not give your attention to what others do or fail to do, whether they are doing what is right or what is wrong. Rather, give your attention to what you do or fail to do, whether you are doing what is right or what is wrong.

Just as a lovely flower, full of color but lacking in fragrance, cannot give anyone the benefit of its scent, the well-spoken words of the Buddha are of no benefit to those who do not put the Dhamma into practice.

Just as a lovely flower, full of both color and fragrance, will give the benefit of its scent to all, the well-spoken words of the Buddha will benefit those who put the Dhamma into practice.

### **The *Sotāpanna* or Stream-Enterer**

MN 22 When they attend wisely in this way, three fetters (*saṃyojana*) are abandoned in them: (1) the delusion of “selfhood” [personality belief] (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), (2) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), and (3) the belief that rites and rituals [are sufficient in themselves to reach enlightenment] (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). Those who have abandoned these three fetters are all Stream-Enterers (*Sotāpanna*), no longer subject to rebirth in a lower realm, bound [for deliverance] and headed for full enlightenment.

Dhp 178      Better than ruling this world, better than going to the realm of the gods, better than being lord of all the worlds is one step taken on the path to nibbāna.

### **The Noble Ones and the Ten Fetters**

Bhikkhu      On entering the irreversible path to the attainment of nibbāna, one becomes a  
Bodhi's      noble person (ariyapuggala), the word “noble” (ariya) here denoting spiritual  
Commentary      nobility. There are four major types of noble persons. Each stage is divided into  
two phases: the path (magga) and its fruition (phala). In the path phase, one is  
said to be practicing for the attainment of a particular fruition, which one is  
bound to realize within that same life; in the resultant phase, one is said to be  
established in that fruition. Thus, the four major types of noble persons actually  
comprise four pairs or eight types of noble individuals. As enumerated these  
are: (1) one practicing for the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, (2) the  
Stream-Enterer, (3) one practicing for the realization of the fruit of once-  
returning, (4) the Once-Returner, (5) one practicing for the realization of the  
fruit of non-returning, (6) the Non-Returner, (7) one practicing for arahantship,  
(8) the Arahant. The first seven persons are collectively known as sekhas,  
trainees or disciples in the higher training; the Arahant is called the asekhā, the  
one beyond training.

The four main stages themselves are defined in two ways: (1) by way of the  
defilements eradicated by the path leading to the corresponding fruit; and (2) by  
way of the destiny after death that awaits one who has realized that particular  
fruit.

The suttas group the defilements abandoned into a set of ten fetters (saṃyojana). The Stream-Enterer abandons the first three fetters: (1) the view of a soul (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), that is, the view of a truly existent essence either as identical with the five aggregates or as existing in some relation to them; (2) doubt (vicikicchā) about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and the training; and (3) the wrong grasp of rules and observances (sīlabbataparāmāsa), the belief that mere external observances, particularly religious rituals and ascetic practices, can lead to liberation. The Stream-Enterer is assured of attaining full enlightenment in at most six more existences, which will all take place either in the human realm or the heavenly worlds. The Stream-Enterer (Sotāpanna) will never undergo an eighth existence (the present existence is counted as the first) and is forever freed from rebirth in the three lower realms — the hells, the realm of afflicted spirits (ghosts), and the animal realm.

The Once-Returner (Sakadāgāmi) does not eradicate any new fetters. He or she has eliminated the three fetters that the Stream-Enterer has destroyed and additionally weakens the three unwholesome roots — greed, hatred, and delusion — so that they do not arise often and, when they do arise, do not become obsessive. As the name implies, the Once-Returner will come back to this world only one more time and then make an end to suffering.

The Non-Returner (Anāgāmi) eradicates the five “lower fetters.” That is, in addition to the three fetters eliminated by the Stream-Enterer, the Non-Returner eradicates two additional fetters, (4) desire for the [gratification of the] five senses and (5) ill-will. Because Non-Returners have eradicated desire for the [gratification of the] five senses, they have no ties binding them to the worlds of the five senses. They thus take birth in the “pure abodes” (suddhāvāsa), only for Non-Returners. They attain final nibbāna there, without ever returning to the worlds of the five senses.

The Non-Returner, however, is still bound by the five “higher fetters”: (6) attachment to jhāna [fine-material absorptions], (7) attachment to the immaterial absorptions, (8) conceit (the thought “I am” sometimes arises), (9) restlessness, and (10) deluded thoughts.

Those who cut off the five higher fetters have no more ties binding them to existence. These are the Arahants, who have destroyed all defilements and are “completely liberated through final knowledge.”

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### **Free from All Speculative Views**

MN 72      Then, does Master Gotama hold any speculative view at all? “Speculative view” is something that the Tathāgata has put away. For the Tathāgata has seen this: “Such is form (rūpa), such its origin, such its disappearance; such is feeling (vedanā), such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception (saññā), such its origin, such its disappearance; such are [predisposing] mental formations (saṁkhāra), such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness (viññāṇa), such its origin, such its disappearance.” Therefore, I say, with the destruction, fading away, cessation, giving up, and relinquishing of all conceptualizations, all excogitations, all I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit, the Tathāgata is liberated through no more clinging.

### **The Three Characteristics**

AN 3.136      Whether Tathāgatas arise or not, there persists that law, that stableness of the Dhamma, that fixed course of the Dhamma: “All phenomena that arise from a cause (saṁkhārā) are impermanent, suffering, and non-self.” A Tathāgata awakens to this and breaks through to it, and then he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, discloses it, analyzes it, and elucidates it.

SN 22.94      And what is it that the wise agree upon as not existing, of which I too say that it does not exist? Form that is permanent, stable, and eternal, not subject to change: this, the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, and I too say that it does not exist. Vedanā ... Perception ... Volitional formations ... Consciousness that are permanent, stable, and eternal, not subject to change — these, the wise agree upon as not existing, and I too say that they do not exist.

- AN 1.15 It is impossible and inconceivable that a person accomplished in view (ariyan) could consider any phenomenon that arises from a cause as permanent, as pleasurable, and as a Self — there is no such possibility. But it is possible that a worldling (puthujjana) might [mistakenly] consider such phenomena that arise from a cause as permanent, as pleasurable, and as a Self — there is such a possibility.

### Views and Discussions about the Self

- DN 15 Now, one who says: “Vedanā is my soul” should be told: “There are three kinds of vedanā: pleasant, painful, and neutral. Which of the three do you consider to be your soul?” When a pleasant vedanā is felt, no painful or neutral vedanā is felt, but only pleasant vedanā. When a painful vedanā is felt, no pleasant or neutral vedanā is felt, but only painful vedanā. And when a neutral vedanā is felt, no pleasant or painful vedanā is felt, but only neutral vedanā.

Pleasant vedanā is impermanent, conditioned, dependently-arisen, bound to decay, to vanish, to fade away, to cease — and so too are painful vedanā and neutral vedanā. So anyone who, on experiencing a pleasant vedanā, thinks: “This is my soul”, must, at the cessation of that pleasant vedanā, think: “My soul has gone!” and the same with painful and neutral vedanā. Thus, whoever thinks: “Vedanā is my soul” is contemplating something in this present life that is impermanent, a mixture of happiness and unhappiness, subject to arising and passing away. Therefore, it is not fitting to maintain: “Vedanā is my soul”.

But anyone who says: “Vedanā is not my soul, my soul is but experiences no vedanā” should be asked: “If no vedanā at all were to be experienced, could there be the concept: ‘I am’?” [To which he would have to reply:] “No, Lord.” Therefore, it is not fitting to maintain: “Vedanā is not my soul, my soul is but experiences no vedanā”.

And anyone who says: “Vedanā is not my soul, my soul is but does not experience vedanā, my soul performs the act of vedanā, that is its nature,” should be asked: “Well, if all vedanā absolutely and totally ceased, could there be the concept: ‘I am this’?” [to which he would have to reply:] “No, Lord.” Therefore, it is not fitting to maintain: “Vedanā is not my soul, my soul is but does not experience vedanā, my soul performs the act of vedanā, that is its nature.”

From the time when a Bhikkhu no longer regards vedanā as the soul; or that the soul is but experiences no vedanā; or that the soul performs the act of vedanā, that is its nature — by so regarding, he clings to nothing in the world; not clinging, he is not agitated by anything, and not being agitated, he gains personal liberation, and he knows: “Rebirth is finished, the holy life has been led, done was what had to be done, there is nothing more here.”

- MN 148      If anyone says, “The mind is the soul” — that is not tenable. The appearance and disappearance of the mind are discerned, and since its appearance and disappearance are discerned, it would follow: “My soul rises, appears, and then disappears.” That is why it is not tenable for anyone to say, “The mind is the soul.” Thus the mind is not the soul.
- If anyone says, “Mind objects are the soul,” ... “Mind consciousness is the soul,” ... “Mind contact is the soul,” ... “Vedanā is the soul,” ... “Craving is the soul” ... That is why it is not tenable for anyone to say, “Craving is the soul.” Thus, the mind is not the soul, mind objects are not the soul, mind consciousness is not the soul, mind contact is not the soul, vedanā is not the soul, craving is not the soul.
- SB 12.61      It would be better for the uninstructed worldling to take as the soul this body (kāya) composed of the four great elements rather than the mind (citta). Why? Because this body composed of the four great elements is seen standing for one year, for two years, for three, four, five, or ten years, for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, for a hundred years, or even longer. But that thing that is called “mind” (citta) or “mentality” (mano) or “consciousness” (viññāṇa) arises as one thing and ceases as another by day and by night.
- SN 22.59      Therefore, any kind of form whatsoever ... any kind of vedanā whatsoever ... any kind of perception whatsoever ... any kind of volitional formations whatsoever ... any kind of consciousness whatsoever whether past, present, or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all form should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my soul”.
- Vism XVI      Mere suffering exists, no one who suffers is found.  
The deed is, but no doer of the deed is there.  
Nibbāna is, but not a person who enters it.  
The path is, but no traveler on it is seen.
- SN 44.4      It is one who does not know and see form as it really is, who does not know and see its origin, its cessation, and the path leading to its cessation, that thinks: “The Tathāgata exists after death,” or “The Tathāgata does not exist after death,” or “The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death,” or “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.” It is one who does not know and see vedanā as it really is ... who does not know and see perception as it really is ... who does not know and see volitional formations as they really are ... who does not know and see consciousness as it really is, who does not know and see their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, that thinks: “The Tathāgata exists after death” ... or “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

But one who knows and sees form ... *vedanā* ... perception ... volitional formations ... consciousness as they really are, who knows and sees their origin, their cessation, and the path leading to their cessation, does not think: “The Tathāgata exists after death” ... or “The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after death.”

## The Two Extremes and the Middle Doctrine

SN 12.15 Venerable Sir, it is said “right view” [“right understanding”]. In what way is there right view?

This world, Kaccana, for the most part depends on a duality, upon the notion of existence and of the notion of non-existence. But for one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of non-existence with regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world.

The world, Kaccana, is for the most part shackled by engagement, clinging, and adherence. But this one [with right view] does not become engaged and cling through that engagement, clinging, mental standpoint, adherence, and underlying tendency; he does not take a position about “my soul”. He has no perplexity or doubt that what arises is only suffering arising, what ceases is only suffering ceasing. His knowledge about this is independent. In this way, Kaccana, there is right view.

“Everything exists” — Kaccana, this is one extreme. “Nothing exists” — this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma in the middle — with delusion as the condition comes Kamma Formations ...

SN 12.35 If there is the view, “The soul and the body are the same,” there is no living of the holy life; and if there is the view, “The soul is one thing, the body is another,” there is no living of the holy life. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma in the middle — dependent origination ...

MN 28 One who sees dependent origination sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination.

## Dependent Origination

SN 12.1 With ignorance (*avijjā*) as cause, volitional formations (*saṃkhārā*) [come to be]; with volitional formations as cause, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) [comes to be]; with consciousness as the cause, name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*) [comes to be]; with name-and-form as the cause, the six sense bases (*saḷāyatana*) [come to be]; with



the six sense bases as cause, contact (phassa) [comes to be]; with contact as cause, feeling (vedanā) [comes to be]; with feeling as cause, craving (taṇhā) [comes to be]; with craving as cause, clinging (upādāna) [comes to be]; with clinging as cause, the process of becoming (bhava) [comes to be]; with the process of becoming as cause, rebirth (jāti) [comes to be]; with rebirth as cause, aging and death (jarāmaraṇa), sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

Vism 19      No doer of the deeds is found,  
                   No one who ever reaps their fruits;  
                   Empty phenomena roll on:  
                   This alone is the correct view.

And while the deeds and their results  
 Roll on and on, conditioned all,  
 There is no first cause to be found,  
 Just as it is with seed and tree ...

No god, no brahmā, can be called  
 The creator of this wheel of life:  
 Empty phenomena roll on,  
 Dependent upon conditions all.

SN 12.51      But when a Bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance (avijjā) and aroused true knowledge (vijjā), then, with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge, he does not generate a meritorious volitional formation, or a demeritorious volitional formation, or a neutral volitional formation. Since he does not generate or fashion volitional formations, he does not cling to anything in the world. Not clinging, he is not agitated. Not being agitated, he personally attains nibbāna.

SN 12.1        But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form, cessation of the six sense bases; with the cessation of the six sense bases, cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, cessation of vedanā; with the cessation of vedanā, cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of the process of becoming; with the cessation of the process of becoming, cessation of rebirth; with the cessation of rebirth, aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.



### Rebirth-Producing Kamma

- MN 43      Rebirth in the future is generated through the delighting in this and that on the part of beings who are blinded by delusion and fettered by craving.
- AN 3.34      Any kamma fashioned through greed (lobha), born of greed, caused by greed, originated by greed, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Any kamma fashioned through hatred (dosa), born of hatred, caused by hatred, originated by hatred, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Any kamma fashioned through delusion (moha), born of delusion, caused by delusion, originated by delusion, ripens wherever the individual is reborn. Wherever that kamma ripens, it is there that one experiences its result, either in this very life, or in the [next] rebirth, or on some subsequent occasion.

### Cessation of Kamma

- MN 43      With the fading away of delusion, with the arising of true knowledge, and with the cessation of craving, rebirth in the future is not generated.
- AN 3.34      So too, any kamma that is fashioned through non-greed ... non-hatred ... non-delusion, born of non-delusion, caused by non-delusion, originated by non-delusion, is abandoned when delusion has vanished; it is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so that it is no more subject to future arising.
- AN 8.12      And in what way could one rightly say of me: “The ascetic Gotama is an annihilationist who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of annihilation and thereby guides his disciples?” For I assert the annihilation of greed, hatred, and delusion; I assert the annihilation of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome qualities.

## 2. Right Thought (Right Intention)

What, now, is right thought (right intention) (sammāsaṅkappo)?

- DN 22      Actions of body, speech, and mind, coming from a motive of renunciation, coming from a motive of kindness, and coming from a motive of gentleness. This is called right thought [right intention].
- MN 78      What are unwholesome intentions? They are intentions of desire for the world of the five senses, of ill-will, and of cruelty. From what do these unwholesome intentions originate? From perception. What perception? From perceptions of desire for gratification of the five senses, of ill-will, and of cruelty. Where do these unwholesome intentions cease without remainder? They cease in the first jhāna.

What are the wholesome intentions? They are intentions of renunciation, kindness, and gentleness. From where do these wholesome intentions originate? From perception. What perception? From perceptions of renunciation, kindness, and gentleness. Where do these wholesome intentions cease without remainder? They cease in the second jhāna.

### 3. Right Speech

DN 22           What now is right speech (*sammāvācā*)? Refraining from false speech, from malicious gossip, from harsh speech, and from useless chatter.

#### **Abstaining from False Speech**

AN 10.176       Here, someone, having abandoned lying, abstains from false speech. If he is summoned to a council, to an assembly, to his relatives' presence, to his place of employment, or to the court, and questioned as a witness thus: "So, good man, tell what you know," then, not knowing, he says, "I do not know," or knowing, he says, "I know"; not seeing, he says, "I do not see," or seeing, he says, "I see." Thus, he does not consciously speak falsehood for his own ends, or for another's ends, or for some trifling worldly end.

#### **Abstaining from Malicious Gossip**

AN 10.176       Having abandoned malicious gossip, he abstains from divisive speech. Having heard something here, he does not repeat it elsewhere in order to divide [those people] from these; or having heard something elsewhere, he does not repeat it to these people in order to divide [them] from those. Thus, he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of unity, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord.

#### **Abstaining from Harsh Speech**

AN 10.176       Having abandoned harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech. He speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and lovable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many, and agreeable to many.

MN 21           Even if torturers were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, you should train thus: "Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving-kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-

kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill-will.” That is how you should train.

### **Abstaining from Useless Chatter**

MN 21      Having abandoned useless chatter, he abstains from worthless talk. He speaks at a proper time, speaks truth, speaks what is beneficial, speaks about the Dhamma and the disciplinary rules; at a proper time, he speaks such words as are worth saying, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.

AN 10.44      Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu who wants to criticize another person should (1) examine himself with respect to five things [nos. 1—5] and (2) establish five things [nos. 6—10] in himself before he criticizes another person:

1. Is my bodily behavior pure? Do I possess bodily behavior that is pure, flawless, and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not? If my bodily behavior is not pure, and I do not possess bodily behavior that is pure, flawless, and irreproachable, there will be those who say of me: “Please train your own bodily behavior first.”
2. Is my speech pure? Do I possess speech that is pure, flawless, and irreproachable? Does this quality exist in me or not? If my speech is not pure, and I do not possess speech that is pure, flawless, and irreproachable, there will be those who say of me: “Please train your own speech first.”
3. Have I established a mind of loving-kindness (*mettā*) without resentment to my fellow Monks? Does this quality exist in me or not? If I have not established a mind of loving-kindness without resentment to my fellow Monks, there will be those who say of me: “Please establish a mind of loving-kindness without resentment to your fellow Monks first.”
4. Am I learned, and do I retain and preserve what I have learned? Have I learned much about those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, which proclaim the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life? Have I retained them in mind, recited them verbally, mentally investigated them, and penetrated them well by view? Does this quality exist in me or not? If not ... there will be those who say of me: “Please learn your own tradition first.”
5. Have both *patimokkhas* been well learned and understood by me? Does this quality exist in me or not? If not ... there will be others who say of me: “Please learn the disciplinary rules first.”
6. I resolve to speak at a proper time, not an improper time.
7. I resolve to speak truthfully, not falsely.
8. I resolve to speak gently, not harshly.
9. I resolve to speak in a beneficial way, not in a way that causes harm.
10. I resolve to speak with a mind of loving-kindness, not while harboring ill will.

## 4. Right Action

What, now, is right action (*sammākammanto*)?

DN 22      Refraining from the destruction of life, refraining from taking what is not given, and refraining from sexual misconduct.

AN 19.176      Here, someone, having abandoned the destruction of life, abstains from the destruction of life. With the rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious and kindly, he dwells compassionate toward all living beings.

Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not steal the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest.

Having abandoned sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct. He does not have sexual relations with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives; who are protected by their Dhamma; who have a husband; whose violation entails a penalty; or even with one already engaged.

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### The Precepts (Moral Training)

Commentary: For Buddhist Monks, the training in morality consists of the observance of 227 rules, while Buddhist Nuns must follow an additional set of rules. The Various Sources collection of these rules is called the *pātimokkha*, that is, the “Code of Conduct” or “Disciplinary Rules,” and is a part of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

Lay practitioners observe either five or eight rules of moral training (*sikkhāpada*), the so-called “five precepts” (*pañca-sīla*) or “eight precepts” (*aṭṭha-sīla*). In any kind of spiritual development, we need to establish our practice on moral principles so that we feel self-respect and stability. The training rules provide a guide that we can use for behavior in our daily lives, and they provide the foundation for the practice of meditation (*bhāvanā*) and the attainment of wisdom (*paññā*).

The five precepts (*pañca-sīla*):

1. To abstain from taking life;
2. To abstain from taking what is not freely given;
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct;
4. To abstain from false speech;
5. To abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness.

The eight precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla* — also called *aṭṭhaṅga-samannāgata uposatha* or *aṭṭhaṅgika-samannāgata uposatha* or *uposatha-sīla*):

1. To abstain from taking life;
2. To abstain from taking what is not freely given;
3. To abstain from all sexual activity;
4. To abstain from false speech;
5. To abstain from intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness;
6. To abstain from eating any solid food after noon;
7. To abstain from dancing, singing, music, and unseemly shows; from the use of garlands, perfumes, and unguents; and from things that tend to beautify and adorn;
8. To abstain from high and luxurious beds and seats.

The purpose of moral training is to bring physical and verbal action under control.

1. The first precept, to abstain from taking life, involves non-violence, non-killing. As we become more developed in the spiritual life, we realize the need to live so that we are not creating violence around us. The more considerate, compassionate, and loving we are towards other beings, both human and non-human, the more we develop our own sense of self-respect, and the more we feel a sense of inner peace and calm.

Thus, training in the first precept means refraining from thoughts, speech, or actions that are violent or harmful both to ourselves and to other beings. It means respecting all living beings and relating to them in a more sensitive, accepting, and open way.

Let us look at refraining from killing in a little more detail to help us understand better what is involved. What constitutes killing a sentient being? First of all, it must be a sentient being. One must know it is a sentient being, and one must intend to kill it. Then, one must make an effort to kill it. That includes taking action oneself as well as encouraging someone else to do it. And finally, the being must be killed. So, we can see how important the mental factor is. If we accidentally step on an insect in the garden, we need not feel guilty about that. But any conscious or intentional killing, ranging from killing the eggs of lice or bugs or causing abortion or the slaughter of any living creature, including human beings, is wrong action.

Let us now examine a practice common in society these days. There is a current belief that it is morally justifiable, and even a duty, to put an animal painlessly to death when it is incurably sick or injured. To those who believe in “mercy-killing,” it may appear strange that this is not approved by Buddhism. There are two reasons why Buddhism does not countenance this practice. The first is that every living being has the results of its own past kamma to work out, and that any interference with this will not be anything more than a temporary alleviation of the suffering it is due to endure. This suffering is a strictly defined quantity, determined by the gravity of the misdeeds in the previous life that have produced it. The killing of a suffering

animal before the full results of its past kamma are exhausted does not bring the suffering to an end. It will continue to suffer in subsequent lives until the full karmic debt has been paid. This will be best understood in the light of the Western difference of opinion concerning euthanasia, the co-called “mercy-killing,” by consent of human beings. Materialists who have no belief in the connection between suffering and moral values maintain that a human being beyond hope of recovery from a painful disease should be allowed to take advantage of the same “merciful release” that is granted to an animal. Those who take the religious view, on the other hand, although they may not understand the karmic working of cause and effect, yet hold that human suffering has some spiritual significance and that, while it is necessary to relieve it as far as possible, it is not in accordance with the belief in the “sacredness of life” to put an end to that suffering until death comes naturally. Buddhism applies the same principle to the case of animals, with even greater force, since, in Buddhism, the nature of suffering, its cause, and its remedy, are fully explained by the law of kamma and its result (vipāka).

The second reason for condemning the mistaken notion of “mercy-killing” concerns the doer of the deed. No killing can be merciful in the true sense of the word, because Abhidhamma ethico-psychology shows plainly that every act of killing, whatever may be its ostensible motive, must be accompanied by the arising of hatred in the mind. In “mercy-killing,” this hatred takes the form of repugnance towards the suffering that is being witnessed. This hatred, the most karmically unwholesome mental factor that can be generated, is momentarily turned towards the suffering creature. What happens in this case is that the “mercy-killer” hates the suffering creature because it unpleasantly reminds him of the pain in the world and his own susceptibility to it. He transfers his hatred of the suffering to the animal that is suffering. He disguises his real feeling as a morally praiseworthy action, and so rationalizes and justifies it to himself. If he understood his own psychology better, he would, at once, recognize the hidden hatred (dosa) that arises in his mind at the moment of performing the lethal deed, and he would not deceive himself, as he does, with the belief that he is motivated by compassion.

Finally, it may be noted that Buddhism does not condone the use of abortion as a means of birth control, but it does support the use of contraceptives.

2. The second precept is refraining from taking what has not been freely given. Obviously, this precept refers to refraining from overt stealing and robbing, but, in a more refined sense, this precept also refers to respecting the property of others. It means that we do not waste time coveting what other people have. Now, it is difficult not to want more, not to covet what others have in a society that is constantly bombarding us with messages of more,

more, more. But this is not the way to develop the spiritual life. So, by following the second precept, we do not take what does not belong to us, we respect what others have without coveting it, and we lessen our own wants.

Refraining from taking what is not freely given means abstaining from taking, with the intention to steal, animate or inanimate property that belongs to someone — removing, or appropriating such property without the owner's consent, whether by one's own physical effort or by inciting someone else to do so.

There are many ways of committing theft besides the crude and obvious methods of stealing and robbery. Many of them, unfortunately, are not only rampant today but are so skillfully disguised that they go uncensored, or are even rewarded. The man who makes a fortune in business by dishonest deals, creating artificial shortages, exploiting his employees, or ruthlessly driving his competitors out of business is not branded as a thief; yet, the fact remains that his prosperity is grounded on the losses of others. Such a man is frequently honored for his position in commerce or industry. But, although the world, with its false standard of values, may admire and praise him, he is merely a thief of a different kind.

Moreover, it is not only the unscrupulous business man who is guilty. Employees who, while being paid a fair wage, shirk their duties, waste their employer's time or create disaffection among their co-workers are also thieves. Government employees and people in high positions who accept bribes, or in any other way trade on their influence instead of discharging their duties justly and with impartiality, are also guilty of taking that which is not rightly theirs. All these are forms of disguised theft, yet, while everyone condemns the common thief, these privileged offenders are accepted by society and are oftentimes considered to be respectable persons. In the light of Buddhist moral doctrine, however, their kamma is no different from that of the man who breaks into a house in the dead of night and robs the householder of his cash and jewelry.

The ordinary thief is a man who goes in constant fear of discovery. When he is exposed, as sooner or later he is certain to be, he is branded as a thief, and his shame is seen by all. With his reputation lost beyond recovery, he is fortunate, indeed, if he is ever able to live down his past in this present life. Few people will trust him, and fewer still will be willing to give him employment or even associate with him. Thus, he brings about his own ruin in this very life.

Yet, there are people of such perverted views that they actually pride themselves on their cleverness in taking what does not belong to them. Even when they are caught, they brazen their way through the situation. It is a disquieting fact that people with this distorted moral outlook seem to be on the increase. There is a tendency today to romanticize the criminal and to make a hero of the man who prides himself on having no regard for the rights of others. There is a widespread cult of thievery, as there is of



violence, and it has become a very pressing social problem. The worldwide financial crisis of 2008—2009, driven by corporate and individual greed, is a glaring example of the magnitude of this problem.

3. The third precept is refraining from sexual misconduct. Refraining from sexual misconduct means avoiding any sexual act that would cause pain or suffering to oneself or to others. Adultery, for example, causes the disruption of marriages. In addition to adultery, sexual misconduct includes rape, seduction, and other obviously inappropriate sexual behaviors, such as sexual relations of a man with a girl under the guardianship of her father, mother, or someone else taking responsibility for her. It is also improper to have sexual relations with a minor, with someone who has taken vows of celibacy, or, for those who are married or in a committed relationship, with any person other than one's husband or wife or partner. On a more subtle level, we need to avoid any activities in which we relate to others as objects of sexual desire — such as watching pornography, talking about our physical attraction to others, and making sexual innuendoes through our words or actions — or that would cause discomfort to others.

Consideration in regard to our intimate relationships also pertains to less obvious forms of sexual misbehavior. For example, if one person in a relationship is not inclined toward sexual intimacy, his or her spouse or partner needs to respect those wishes and act accordingly. Conversely, attempts to coerce one's spouse or partner to be intimate or to use intimacy as a bargaining chip or as a means to manipulate, control, or punish one's partner demonstrates a lack of consideration and is regarded as a breach of this precept.

Buddhist Monks and Nuns live in strictly segregated communities and are required to refrain from any expression of sexual desire and from all sexual activity. They are also required to act very circumspectly whenever they are in contact with members of the opposite sex. In joining the Order of Monks or Nuns, they have made a conscious decision to make a maximum effort to attain liberation, and many of the rules, as well as the organization of the Orders, help Monks and Nuns avoid unnecessary stimulation of sensual desires. A man or a woman who is incapable of restraint is encouraged to leave the Orders and become a lay practitioner again, with no stigma attached, and they are free also to return to the Orders.

Buddhism condemns neither premarital sex nor homosexuality. There is no direct reference to homosexuality in the first four Nikāyas, and the Buddha never spoke against this kind of emotion or activity. An indirect reference may occur in a single passage in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, where Monks are counseled against being overly devoted to one person. If a Monk says to another Monk "he is dear and lovely to me," he is likely to be adversely affected should the beloved companion fall into error, go



elsewhere, become ill, or die. The Jātaka Tales, on the other hand, contain several accounts of loving relationships of this kind.

It should also be noted that Buddhism does not condemn polygamy, which was widely practiced at the time of the Buddha. Consequently, this precept should not be interpreted in the Western sense of “one man, one woman.” Indeed, if “sexual misconduct” is interpreted to mean having more than one wife, it is certainly a misunderstanding of the term. What is condemned is taking sexual pleasure with a woman who stands in a relationship, even if only temporary, with another man.

According to Buddhism, sexual passion is detrimental to spiritual progress. However, Buddhism does not make any artificial distinctions, as does Western sexual morality, between different forms of sexual desire. From a Buddhist point of view, all forms of sexual desire are equally detrimental. But the Buddhist solution to the problem does not involve suppressing the sexual instinct, and it is certainly not to be dealt with by making arbitrary laws limiting the number of wives a man may have or the number of husbands a woman may have, nor by unofficially approving of one standard of morality for one sex and condemning it in the other sex, as is done in the West. Western repressive measures against sex have so far been successful only in one thing — producing feelings of shame or guilt in matters relating to sex and marriage. This is cruelty masquerading as morality. The Buddhist method of dealing with the issue is not legalistic, but therapeutic. Sexual craving, like any other craving, is to be eradicated not by suppression but by gradually removing its root. The practice of meditation directed towards the impurities of the body, the transience of physical beauty, and the painful nature of the passion that sexual desire engenders, is a form of mental therapy that weakens sexual attraction and, in the end, re-orientes the mind away from sexual desire. It is a process of gradual cleansing of the mind that is fully in accordance with natural psychological processes.

4. The fourth precept is abstaining from wrong speech. This precept requires abstaining from false speech, vulgar speech, sarcasm, gossip, idle chatter, and all heedless ways in which we can use speech.

Right speech means speech that is truthful, beneficial, and neither foul nor malicious. Right speech can be divided into four parts:

1. Refraining from telling lies;
2. Refraining from back-biting and slander or false accusation;
3. Refraining from using abusive language, harsh words, and speech that is harmful to others;
4. Refraining from frivolous talk, such as telling tales or any other type of useless speech.

Specifically, right speech means cultivating the following types of speech:

1. Talk about desiring little;
2. Talk about contentment;
3. Talk about solitude, which can be physical or mental solitude and the highest solitude, *nibbāna*;
4. Talk about remaining aloof, which includes talk about abstaining from activities that might arouse sexual desire;
5. Talk about making right effort (*sammā vāyāma*);
6. Talk about morality (*sīla*);
7. Talk about concentration (*samādhi*);
8. Talk about wisdom (*paññā*);
9. Talk about deliverance (*vimutti*);
10. Talk about knowledge and vision of deliverance, meaning retrospective knowledge; retrospective knowledge comes just after attaining an absorption state or one of the paths or fruition states in the four stages of awakening.

It is actually quite difficult to practice this precept, because our society involves us in so many negative speech habits. It is socially acceptable to talk about what other people are doing, to chit-chat, to exaggerate, and to chatter endlessly just to break the silence. We can also be very cruel with our speech. If we are developing a spiritual life, we have to be very careful about what we say to others or about others so that we are not intentionally causing them pain. It is inevitable that we will sometimes say things that upset people — we cannot help that. But our intention should be to refrain from speaking with malicious intent. We should take responsibility for what we say, for how we speak, and for the suggestions we give to others.

5. The fifth precept is about abstaining from drinking alcoholic beverages and using drugs. This precept is important, because, for our spiritual growth, we are trying to develop a consciousness that is clear and focused. This cannot happen when we are being influenced by alcohol or drugs.

When we meditate, we start from where we are now. We do not take drugs in order to feel at one with the universe. The way to insight, unity, and oneness is not through drugs, but through right understanding, that is, through seeing things as they really are.

In addition, the precepts also require one to abstain from gambling with cards, dice, and so forth.

The five precepts provide the moral foundation for our practice. They need to be reaffirmed daily and made an integral part of our lives. That is to say that we must make a constant effort — we must keep reminding ourselves — to refrain

from unwholesome thoughts, speech, and actions and to nurture and perform wholesome thoughts, speech, and actions until they become second nature to us.

The Buddha's fundamental moral teachings are of universal applicability and belong to a timeless order of ethical principles. The five precepts, which the Buddha laid down as necessary in his own day, are no less necessary today, and they require no modification to bring them into line with our own needs.

In all of this, mindfulness (*sati*) is the key for knowing what we are thinking, saying, or doing, and is, thus, the starting point. Mindfulness is the tool for shaping the mind, and is, thus, the focal point. Finally, mindfulness is the manifestation of the achieved freedom of the mind, and is, thus, the culminating point. Learning to control attention is the key to gaining access to the vital energy that drives the whole organism we call our "self" and to using that energy wisely. No skill in living is more useful.

## 5. Right Livelihood

What, now, is right livelihood (*sammā-ājīvo*)?

DN 22 Here, the noble disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, supports himself through right livelihood.

AN 5.177 A lay follower should not engage in these five trades. What five? (1) Trading in weapons, (2) trading in living beings, (3) trading in meat, (4) trading in intoxicants, and (5) trading in poisons. A lay follower should not engage in these five trades.

## 6. Right Effort

What, now, is right effort (*sammāvāyāmo*)?

AN 4.13—4.14 There are these four efforts: (1) restraint, (2) abandonment, (3) development, (4) protection.

### The Effort to Restrain

AN 4.13—4.14 And what is the effort to restrain? Here, having seen an object, he does not grasp its marks and features. Since if he left the faculty of sight unrestrained, unskillful states of wanting and aversion might invade him, he practices restraint over it, he guards the faculty of sight, he undertakes the restraint of sight.

Having heard a sound ... Having noticed a smell ... Having sensed a taste ... Having felt a feeling with ... Having cognized something in the mind, he does not grasp its marks and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unrestrained,

unskillful states of wanting and aversion might invade him, he practices restraint over it, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. This is called the effort to restrain.

### **The Effort to Abandon**

AN 4.13—4.14 And what is the effort to abandon? Here, he does not indulge an arisen thought of desire for gratification of the senses; he abandons it, dispels it, terminates it, and obliterates it.

He does not indulge an arisen thought of ill-will ... an arisen thought of harming ... bad unwholesome states whenever they arise; he abandons them, dispels them, terminates them, and obliterates them. This is called the effort to abandon.

MN 20 When a Bhikkhu is giving attention to some sign, and owing to that sign, there arise in him bad unwholesome thoughts connected with greed, with hatred, and with delusion, then (1) when he gives attention to some other sign connected with what is wholesome, any such evil unwholesome thoughts are abandoned in him and subside, and with the abandoning of them, his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to single-pointedness and concentration. (2) When he examines the danger in those thoughts ... (3) When he tries to ignore those thoughts and does not give attention to them ... (4) When he gives attention to stilling the causes of those thoughts ... (5) When, with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth, he beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind, any such evil unwholesome thoughts are abandoned in him ... and his mind becomes steadied internally, quieted, brought to single-pointedness and concentration.

### **The Effort to Develop**

AN 4.13—4.14 And what is the effort to develop? Here, he develops (1) the enlightenment factor (bojjhaṅga) of mindfulness (sati) ... (2) the enlightenment factor of contemplating Dhamma (dhamma-vicaya) ... (3) the enlightenment factor of energy (viriya) ... (4) the enlightenment factor of rapture (pīti) ... (5) the enlightenment factor of tranquility (passaddhi) ... (6) the enlightenment factor of concentration (samādhi) ... (7) the enlightenment factor of equanimity (upekkhā), which is based upon seclusion, fading away, and cessation, maturing in release. This is called striving by development.

### **The Effort to Protect**

AN 4.13—4.14 And what is the effort to protect? Here, he protects an arisen excellent object of concentration: the perception of a skeleton, the perception of a worm-infested corpse, the perception of a livid corpse, the perception of a festering corpse, the

perception of a fissured corpse, the perception of a bloated corpse. This is called striving by protection.

- AN 4.14      Restraint and abandonment, development and protection,  
 These four strivings were taught by the Kinsman of the Sun.  
 By these means, an ardent Bhikkhu here,  
 Can attain the destruction of suffering.

## 7. Right Mindfulness

What, now, is right mindfulness (*sammāsatī*)?

### The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

- MN 10      This is a path leading in one direction, to the purification of beings, to the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, to the disappearance of physical and mental suffering, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of *nibbāna* — namely, the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).

What are the four? (1) Here, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. (2) He abides contemplating *vedanā*, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. (3) He abides contemplating the mind, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. (4) He abides contemplating mind-objects, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).

### 1. Contemplation of Body

- MN 10      And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating the body (*kāya*)?

#### Mindfulness of Breathing

- MN 10      Here a Bhikkhu, having gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty place, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and giving priority to establishing mindfulness, mindfully, he breathes in, mindfully, he breathes out. When the in-breath is long, he understands: “I breathe in long”; when the out-breath is long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When the in-breath is short, he understands: “I breathe in short”; when the out-breath is short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall experience the whole of the breath as I breathe in”; he trains thus: “I shall experience the whole of the breath as I breathe out.” He trains thus: “I shall calm the bodily formation [the breath] as I breathe in”; he trains thus: “I shall calm the bodily

formation [the breath] as I breathe out”. Just as a skilled lathe-operator or his apprentice, when making a long turn, understands: “I make a long turn”; or, when making a short turn, understands: “I make a short turn”; so too, breathing in long, a Bhikkhu understands: “I breathe in long” ... he trains thus: “I shall breathe out calming the bodily formation [the breath].”

In this way, he abides contemplating his own body, or he abides contemplating the body of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others’ bodies. Or else he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of arising [its causes], or he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of ceasing [that when the causes cease, so does the body], or he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of both arising and ceasing. Or else, mindfulness that “it is just a body” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body.

### **The Four Postures**

MN 10      Again, (1) when walking, a Bhikkhu understands: “I am walking”; (2) when standing, he understands: “I am standing”; (3) when sitting, he understands: “I am sitting”; (4) when lying down, he understands: “I am lying down”; or he understands accordingly however his body is disposed.

In this way, he abides contemplating his own body, or he abides contemplating the body of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others’ bodies ... And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That, too, is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body.

### **Full Comprehension of the Purpose**

MN 10      Again, a Bhikkhu is one who acts in full comprehension of the purpose when going forward and returning; who acts in full comprehension of the purpose when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full comprehension of the purpose when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full comprehension of the purpose wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full comprehension of the purpose regarding eating, drinking, and smelling and tasting food; defecating and urinating; walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, being awake, talking, and keeping silent.

### **Foulness — The Bodily Parts**

MN 10      Again, a Bhikkhu reviews this same body up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair, bounded by skin, as full of many kinds of impurity thus: “In this body, there are head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen,

lungs, intestines, stomach, mesentery, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine.”

Just as though there were a bag with an opening at both ends full of many sorts of grain, such as hill rice, red rice, beans, peas, millet, and white rice, and a man with good eyes were to open it and review it thus: “This is hill rice, this is red rice, these are beans, these are peas, this is millet, this is white rice”; so too, a Bhikkhu reviews this same body ... as full of many kinds of impurity thus: “In this body, there are head-hairs ... and urine.”

### Elements

MN 10 Again, a Bhikkhu reviews this same body, however it is placed, however disposed, by way of elements thus: “In this body, there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.” Just as though a skilled butcher or his apprentice had killed a cow and was seated at the crossroads with it cut up into pieces; so too, a Bhikkhu reviews this same body ... by way of elements thus: “In this body, there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.”

### The Nine Charnel Ground [Cemetery] Contemplations

MN 10 (1) Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, one, two, or three days dead, bloated, livid, and oozing matter, a Bhikkhu compares the dead body with his own thus: “My own body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.” (2) Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs, jackals, or various kinds of worms, a Bhikkhu compares the dead body with his own thus: “My own body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.” (3) Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together with sinews ... (4) a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, held together with sinews ... (5) a skeleton without flesh and blood, held together with sinews ... (6) disconnected bones scattered in all directions — here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a back-bone, here a rib-bone, there a breast-bone, here an arm-bone, there a shoulder-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there the skull — a Bhikkhu compares the dead body with his own thus: “My own body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.” (7) Again, as though he were to see a corpse thrown aside in a charnel ground, bones bleached white, the color of shells ... (8) bones heaped up ... (9) bones more than a year old, rotted and crumbled to dust, a Bhikkhu compares the dead body with his own thus: “My own body too is of the same nature, it will be like that, it is not exempt from that fate.”



In this way, he abides contemplating his own body, or he abides contemplating the body of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others' bodies. Or else he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of ceasing, or he abides contemplating, in the body, its nature of both arising and ceasing. Or else mindfulness that "it is just a body" is simply established in him to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That too is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body.

### **Benefits of Mindfulness of the Body**

MN 119

When mindfulness of the body has been repeatedly practiced, developed, cultivated, used as a vehicle, used as a basis, established, consolidated, and well undertaken, ten benefits may be expected. What ten?

1. One becomes a conqueror of discontent and delight, and discontent does not conquer oneself; one abides overcoming discontent whenever it arises.
2. One becomes a conqueror of fear and dread, and fear and dread do not conquer oneself; one abides overcoming fear and dread whenever they arise.
3. One bears cold and heat, hunger and thirst, and contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and creeping things; one endures ill-spoken, unwelcome words and arisen bodily feelings that are painful, racking, sharp, piercing, disagreeable, distressing, and menacing to life.
4. One experiences whenever needed, without trouble or difficulty, the four absorptions (jhānas) that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now.
5. One wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; he appears and vanishes; he goes unhindered through a wall, through an enclosure, through a mountain as though through space; he dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; he walks on water without sinking as though it were earth; seated cross-legged, he travels in space like a bird; with his hand he touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty; he wields bodily mastery even as far as the Brahma-world.
6. With the divine ear element, which is purified and surpasses the human, one hears both kinds of sounds, the divine and the human, those that are far as well as near.
7. One understands the minds of other beings, of other persons, having encompassed them with his own mind. He understands a mind affected by greed as affected by greed and a mind unaffected by greed as unaffected by greed; he understands a mind affected by hate as affected by hate and a mind unaffected by hate as unaffected by hate; he understands a mind affected by delusion as affected by delusion and a mind unaffected by



delusion as unaffected by delusion; he understands a contracted mind [sloth and torpor] as contracted and a distracted mind [restless and remorseful] as distracted; he understands an exalted mind as exalted and an unexalted mind as unexalted; he understands a surpassed mind as surpassed and an unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed; he understands a concentrated mind as concentrated and an unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated; he understands a liberated mind as liberated and an unliberated mind as unliberated.

8. One recollects one's manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many eons of world-contraction, many eons of world-expansion, many eons of world-contraction and expansion: "There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my diet, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere; and there too, I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my diet, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared here." Thus, with their aspects and particulars, he recollects his manifold past lives.
9. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, one sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and one understands how beings pass on according to their actions.
10. By realizing for oneself with direct knowledge, one here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints [cankers] (*āśava*).

## 2. Contemplation of Vedanā

MN 10

And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating feelings (*vedanā*)? Here, when feeling a pleasant *vedanā*, a Bhikkhu understands: "I feel a pleasant *vedanā*"; when feeling a painful *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel a painful *vedanā*"; when feeling a neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel a neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*." When feeling a worldly pleasant *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel a worldly pleasant *vedanā*"; when feeling an unworldly pleasant *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel an unworldly pleasant *vedanā*"; when feeling a worldly painful *vedanā* he understands: "I feel a worldly painful *vedanā*"; when feeling an unworldly painful *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel an unworldly painful *vedanā*"; when feeling a worldly neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel a worldly neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*"; when feeling an unworldly neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*, he understands: "I feel an unworldly neither-pleasant-nor-painful *vedanā*."

In this way, he abides contemplating his own vedanā, or he abides contemplating the vedanā of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others' vedanā. Or else he abides contemplating in vedanā their nature of arising, or he abides contemplating in vedanā their nature of ceasing, or he abides contemplating in vedanā their nature of both arising and ceasing. Or else, mindfulness that "it is just vedanā" is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating vedanā.

### 3. Contemplation of Mind

MN 10

And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating the [state of the] mind (citta)? Here, a Bhikkhu understands mind affected by greed (lobha) as mind affected by greed, and mind unaffected by greed as mind unaffected by greed. He understands mind affected by hatred (dosa) as mind affected by hatred, and mind unaffected by hatred as mind unaffected by hatred. He understands mind affected by delusion (moha) as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind [sloth and torpor], and distracted mind as distracted mind [restlessness and worry]. He understands exalted mind [in jhāna] as exalted mind, and unexalted mind as unexalted mind. He understands surpassed mind [in jhāna] as surpassed mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He understands concentrated mind [in jhāna] as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind. He understands liberated mind [in jhāna] as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind.

In this way, he abides contemplating his own mind, or he abides contemplating the mind of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others' minds. Or else, he abides contemplating, in mind, its nature of arising, or he abides contemplating, in mind, its nature of ceasing, or he abides contemplating, in mind, its nature of both arising and ceasing. Or else, mindfulness that "it is just the mind" is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the mind.

### 4. Contemplation of Mind-Objects

And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects (dhammā)?

## The Five Hindrances

MN 10

Here, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects [contents of mind] in terms of the five hindrances (nīvaraṇa). And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five hindrances?

Here, (1) there being desire for gratification of the senses (kāmacchanda) in him, a Bhikkhu understands: “There is desire for gratification of the senses in me”; or there being no desire for gratification of the senses in him, he understands: “There is no desire for gratification of the senses in me”; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen desire for gratification of the senses, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen desire for gratification of the senses, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned desire for gratification of the senses.

(2) There being ill-will (vyāpāda) in him ... (3) There being sloth and torpor (thīna-middha) in him ... (4) There being restlessness and worry (uddhacca-kukkucca) in him ... (5) There being skeptical doubt (indecisiveness) (vicikicchā) in him, a Bhikkhu understands: “There is skeptical doubt in me”; or there being no skeptical doubt in him, he understands: “There is no skeptical doubt in me”; and he understands how there comes to be the arising of unarisen skeptical doubt, and how there comes to be the abandoning of arisen skeptical doubt, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of abandoned skeptical doubt.

Nyanatiloka’s  
Commentary

The overcoming of these five hindrances by the absorptions is ... a merely temporary suspension, called “overcoming through repression” (vikkhambhana-pahāna). They disappear forever on entering the four supermundane paths (s. ariyapuggala), i.e. skeptical doubt on reaching Sotāpanaship, sensuous desire [desire for gratification of the senses], ill-will, and mental worry on reaching Anāgāmi-ship; sloth and restlessness on reaching Arahantship.

MN 39

Suppose a man were to take a loan and undertake business and his business were to succeed so that he could repay all the money of the old loan and there would remain enough extra to maintain a wife; then, on considering this, he would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose a man were afflicted, suffering and gravely ill, and his food would not agree with him and his body had no strength, but later he would recover from the affliction and his food would agree with him and his body would regain strength; then, on considering this, he would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose a man were imprisoned in a jail, but later he would be released from prison, safe and secure, with no loss to his property; then, on considering this, he would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose a man were a slave, not self-dependent but dependent on others, unable to go where he wants, but later on, he would be released from slavery, self-dependent, independent of others, a freed man able to go where he wants; then, on considering this, he would be glad and full of joy.

Or suppose a man with wealth and property were to enter a road across a desert, but later on, he would cross over the desert, safe and secure, with no loss to his property; then, on considering this, he would be glad and full of joy.

So too, when these five hindrances are unabandoned in himself, a Bhikkhu sees them respectively as a debt, a disease, a prison, slavery, and a road across a desert. But when these five hindrances have been abandoned, he sees that as freedom from debt, healthiness, release from prison, freedom from slavery, and a land of safety.

### **The Five Aggregates**

MN 10      Again, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*). And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the five aggregates? Here, a Bhikkhu understands: “Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is *vedanā*, such its origin, such its disappearance; such is perception, such its origin, such its disappearance; such are the mental formations, such their origin, such their disappearance; such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.”

### **The Six Sense Bases**

MN 10      Again, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases (*āyatana*). And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the six internal and external bases? Here, a Bhikkhu understands sight, he understands forms, and he understands the fetter that arises dependent on both; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen fetter, and how there comes to be the abandoning of the arisen fetter, and how there comes to be the future non-arising of the abandoned fetter. And so on with the other five sense bases.

### **The Seven Factors of Enlightenment**

MN 10      Again, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*). And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the seven factors of enlightenment? Here, there being (1) the mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: “There is the mindfulness enlightenment factor in me”; or there being no mindfulness enlightenment factor in him, he understands: “There is no mindfulness enlightenment factor in me”; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen mindfulness factor of enlightenment,

and how the arisen mindfulness enlightenment factor comes to fulfilment by development. (2) There being the contemplation of the Dhamma enlightenment factor in him ... (3) There being the energy enlightenment factor in him ... (4) There being the joy enlightenment factor in him ... (5) There being the tranquility enlightenment factor in him ... (6) There being the concentration enlightenment factor in him ... (7) There being the equanimity enlightenment factor in him, a Bhikkhu understands: “There is the equanimity enlightenment factor in me”; or there being no equanimity enlightenment factor in him, he understands: “There is no equanimity enlightenment factor in me”; and he also understands how there comes to be the arising of the unarisen equanimity enlightenment factor, and how the arisen equanimity enlightenment factor comes to fulfilment by development.

### The Four Noble Truths

MN 10

Again, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths (ariya-sacca). And how does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths? Here, a Bhikkhu understands as it actually is: “This is suffering”; he understands as it actually is: “This is the origin of suffering”; he understands as it actually is: “This is the cessation of suffering”; he understands as it actually is: “This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.”

In this way, he abides contemplating his own mind objects, or he abides contemplating the mind objects of others as the same as his, or he abides contemplating his own and others’ mind objects. Or else, he abides contemplating, in mind-objects, their nature of arising, or he abides contemplating, in mind-objects, their nature of ceasing, or he abides contemplating, in mind-objects, their nature of both arising and ceasing. Or else, mindfulness that “there are mind-objects” is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects in terms of the Four Noble Truths.

So it was with reference to this that it was said: “This is a path leading in one direction to the purification of beings, to the surmounting of sorrow and lamentation, to the disappearance of mental and physical suffering, for the attainment of the true way, for the realization of nibbāna — namely, the four foundations of mindfulness.”

SN 47.42

What, Bhikkhus, is the arising of the body (kāya)? With the arising of the four nutriment (āhāra) — (1) material food (kābalīṅkārahāra), (2) [physical and mental] contact (phassa), (3) mental volition [will] (manosañcetanā), and (4) consciousness (viññāṇa) —, there is the arising of the body. With the ceasing of the four nutriment, there is the ceasing of the body.

With the arising of contact, there is the arising of *vedanā*. With the ceasing of contact, there is the ceasing of *vedanā*.

With the arising of name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*), there is the arising of the mind (*citta*). With the ceasing of name-and-form, there is the ceasing of the mind.

With the arising of attention (*manasikāra*), there is the arising of dhammas [constituents of nature, phenomena]. With the ceasing of attention, there is the ceasing of dhammas.

### **Nibbāna through Ānāpānasati**

MN 118

When mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness. When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfil the seven factors of enlightenment. When the seven factors of enlightenment are developed and cultivated, they fulfil true knowledge and deliverance.

And how does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfil the four foundations of mindfulness?

1. On whatever occasion, when the in-breath is long, he understands: “I breathe in long”; when the out-breath is long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When the in-breath is short, he understands: “I breathe in short”; when the out-breath is short, he understands: “I breathe out short”; when he trains thus: “I shall experience the whole of the breath as I breathe in”; when he trains thus: “I shall experience the whole of the breath as I breathe out”; when he trains thus: “I shall calm the bodily formation [the breath] as I breathe in”; when he trains thus: “I shall calm the bodily formation [the breath] as I breathe out” — on those occasions, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. I say that this is a certain body among “bodies”, namely, in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why, on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances.
2. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu trains thus: “I shall experience joy as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall experience joy as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall experience pleasure as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall experience pleasure as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall experience the mental formation [of *pītisukha*] as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall experience the mental formation [of *pītisukha*] as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall calm this mental formation as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall calm this mental formation as I breathe out” — on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating *vedanā*, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. I say that this is a certain *vedanā*, namely,

giving close attention to the vedanā associated with breathing. That is why, on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating vedanā, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances.

3. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu trains thus: “I shall experience the mind (citta) as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall experience the citta as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall bring joy to the citta as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall bring joy to the citta as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall concentrate the citta as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall concentrate the citta as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall liberate the citta [into jhāna] as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall liberate the citta [into jhāna] as I breathe out” — on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the mind, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. I do not say that there is the development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is dull, who is not fully aware. That is why, on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the mind, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances.
4. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu trains thus: “I shall contemplate impermanence (aniccatā) as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate impermanence as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate fading away as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate fading away as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate cessation as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate cessation as I breathe out”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate relinquishment as I breathe in”; trains thus: “I shall contemplate relinquishment” as I breathe out — on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the Dhamma, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances. Having seen with wisdom the abandoning of the five hindrances, he closely looks on with equanimity (upekkhā). That is why, on that occasion, a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the Dhamma, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances.

That is how mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness.



MN 118

And how do the four foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna), developed and cultivated, fulfil the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhaṅga)?

1. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu abides contemplating the body, ardent, fully aware of the purpose, and mindful, having restrained the five hindrances — on that occasion, unremitting mindfulness is established in him. On whatever occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in a Bhikkhu — on that occasion, the mindfulness enlightenment factor is



- aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
2. Abiding thus mindful, he investigates and examines the Dhamma with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it. On whatever occasion, abiding thus mindful, a Bhikkhu investigates and examines the Dhamma with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it — on that occasion, the investigation-of-Dhamma enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
  3. In one who investigates and examines the Dhamma with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it, tireless energy is aroused. On whatever occasion tireless energy is aroused in a Bhikkhu who investigates and examines the Dhamma with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it — on that occasion, the energy enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
  4. In one who has aroused energy, unworldly rapture arises. On whatever occasion, unworldly rapture arises in a Bhikkhu who has aroused energy — on that occasion, the rapture enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
  5. In one who is rapturous, the body and the mind become tranquil. On whatever occasion the body and the mind become tranquil in a Bhikkhu who is rapturous — on that occasion, the tranquility enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
  6. In one whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. On whatever occasion the mind becomes concentrated in a Bhikkhu whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure — on that occasion, the concentration enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.
  7. He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. On whatever occasion a Bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated — on that occasion, the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.

That is how the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfil the seven factors of enlightenment.



MN 118

Here, a Bhikkhu develops the mindfulness enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment. He develops the investigation-of-Dhamma enlightenment factor ... the energy enlightenment factor ... the rapture enlightenment factor ... the tranquility enlightenment factor ... the concentration enlightenment factor ... the



equanimity enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

That is how the seven factors of enlightenment, developed and cultivated, fulfil true knowledge and deliverance.



- MN 125 Just as the elephant tamer plants a large post in the earth and binds the forest elephant to it by the neck in order to subdue his forest habits ... and to inculcate in him habits congenial to human beings, so these four foundations of mindfulness are the bindings for the mind of the noble disciple in order to subdue his habits based on the household life, to subdue his memories and intentions based on the household life, to subdue his distress, fatigue, and fever based on the household life, and in order that he may attain the true way and realize nibbāna.

## 8. Right Concentration

And what, now, is right concentration (sammāsamādhi)?

- MN 36 I remembered that when my father was occupied, while I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, quite secluded from the five senses, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered and abided in the first absorption (jhāna). Could that be the path to enlightenment? Then, following on that memory came the realization: “That is, indeed, the path to enlightenment.”

### The Four Fine Material Absorptions (Rūpajjhānas)

- MN 27 (1) Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, totally secluded from the five senses, secluded from unwholesome states, one enters upon and abides in the first [fine material] jhāna, which is accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion from the five senses.
- MN 43 In the first jhāna, five factors [the five hindrances] are abandoned and five factors are possessed. When one has entered upon the first jhāna, (1) desire for gratification of the senses is abandoned, (2) hatred, ill-will, and aversion are abandoned, (3) sloth and torpor are abandoned, (4) restlessness and worry are abandoned, and (5) skeptical doubt is abandoned; and there occur (1) applied thought, (2) sustained thought, (3) rapture, (4) joy, and (5) one-pointedness of mind. That is how, in the first jhāna, five factors are abandoned and five factors are possessed.

- MN 27 (2) Again, with the stilling applied thought and sustained thought, one enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has confidence [in the bliss] and one-pointedness of mind without any movements of the mind onto the object or holding on to the object of bliss, with rapture and joy born of concentration.
- (3) Again, with the fading away as well of rapture, a Bhikkhu abides mindful and fully aware, in equanimity, experiencing the joy of concentration, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: “He has a joyful abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.
- (4) Again, having abandoned pleasure and pain [all vedanā from the five physical senses], and with the disappearance of joy and grief [all vedanā from the sixth sense except for equanimity], a Bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither painful mental vedanā nor pleasurable mental vedanā, just purified mindfulness due to equanimity.
- Vism IV.  
79—197 (1) Detached from sensory objects, O Bhikkhus, detached from unwholesome consciousness, he enters upon and dwells in the first absorption (jhāna), which is accompanied by applied thought (vitakka) and sustained thought (vicāra), born of detachment (vivekaja) and filled with rapture (pīti) and joy (sukha).
- (2) After the subsiding of applied thought (vitakka) and sustained thought (vicāra), and by gaining inner tranquility (samatha) and one-pointedness of mind (citt’ekaggatā, cittass’ekaggatā), he enters into a state free from applied thought and sustained thought — the second absorption —, which is born of concentration (samādhi) and filled with rapture (pīti) and joy (sukha).
- (3) After the fading away of rapture, he dwells in equanimity (upekkhā), mindful, clearly conscious; and he experiences, in his person, that feeling of which the Noble Ones say, “Happy lives the man of equanimity and attentive mind”; thus, he enters the third absorption.
- (4) After having given up pleasure and pain, and through the disappearance of previous joy and grief, he enters into a state beyond pleasure and pain, into the fourth absorption, which is purified by equanimity and one-pointedness of mind.
- MN 108 And what kind of meditation did the Blessed One praise? Here, Brahmin, totally secluded from the five senses ... the Bhikkhu abides in the first jhāna. With the stilling of applied thought and sustained thought ... the Bhikkhu abides in the second jhāna. With the fading away of rapture ... the Bhikkhu abides in the third jhāna. With the abandoning of all mental pleasant and unpleasant vedanā ... the Bhikkhu abides in the fourth jhāna. The Blessed One praised that kind of meditation.
- DN 29 There are, Cunda, these four kinds of life devoted to pleasure that are entirely conducive to repulsion, to fading away, cessation, peace, realization,

enlightenment, to nibbāna. What are they? The four [fine-material] absorptions (rūpajjhānas). So, if devotees of other sects should say that the Buddhists are addicted to these four forms of pleasure seeking, they should be told “Yes”, for they would be speaking correctly about you. Then, such people might ask how many fruits and benefits can one expect from a life given to these four forms of pleasure seeking? You should reply that they can expect four fruits, four benefits: (1) Stream Winner (Sotāpanna), (2) Once Returner (Sakadāgami), (3) Non-Returner (Anāgāmi), or (4) Arahant. Such are the four fruits and benefits that one can expect from these four forms of pleasure seeking.

- MN 64      There is a path (magga), Ānanda, a way, to the abandoning of the five lower fetters (saṃyojana). It is impossible that anyone can know or see or abandon these five lower fetters without relying on that path. No more than it is possible to cut out the heartwood of a tree without cutting through its bark and sapwood.
- And what is that path? The four fine material absorptions (rūpajjhāna) and the first three immaterial absorptions (arūpajjhāna).
- AN 8.81      When one has no jhāna, for one deficient in jhāna, the cause for seeing things as they truly are is destroyed. When one does not see things as they truly are, for one deficient in such wisdom, the cause for repulsion and fading away is destroyed. When one is not repulsed nor inclines to disappearing, for one deficient in these, the cause for knowledge and vision of liberation is destroyed.
- SN 22.5      Develop concentration. A Bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are. And what does he understand as it really is? The origin and passing away of form; the origin and passing away of vedanā; the origin and passing away of perception; the origin and passing away of [predisposing] mental formations; the origin and passing away of consciousness.
- Dhp 372      There can be no concentration in those who lack wisdom,  
And no wisdom in those who lack concentration.  
Those in whom there is both wisdom and concentration,  
Are, indeed, close to nibbāna!
- SN 56.11      This is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to nibbāna.
- Dhp 275      This path will lead to the end of suffering. This is the path I made known after the arrows of sorrow fell away.

### **The Four Immaterial Absorptions (Arūpajjhānas)**

- Vism X.1—66 (5) Through having completely transcended all perceptions in the fine-material sphere, and through the vanishing of sense-perceptions, rising above the idea of multiform phenomena, at the idea “space is boundless,” one attains and abides in the sphere of boundless space (ākāsānañcāyatana).
- (6) Through having completely transcended the sphere of boundless space, at the idea “consciousness is infinite,” one attains and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatana).
- (7) Through having completely transcended the sphere of infinite consciousness, at the idea “nothing really exists,” one attains and abides in the sphere of nothingness (ākīñcaññāyatana).
- (8) Through having completely transcended the sphere of nothingness, one attains and abides in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (n’eva-saññā-nasaññāyatana).



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## The Gradual Training

### Confidence

MN 38

A householder or householder's son or one born in some other family hears this Dhamma. On hearing the Dhamma, he acquires faith in the Tathāgata. Possessing that faith, he considers thus: "Household life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, while living in a home, to lead the holy life utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shave off my hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and go forth from the home life into homelessness." On a later occasion, abandoning a small or a large fortune, abandoning a small or a large circle of relatives, he shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the yellow robe, and goes forth from the home life into homelessness.

### Virtue

MN 38

Having thus gone forth and possessing the Bhikkhu's training and way of life, abandoning the killing of living beings, he abstains from killing living beings; with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious, merciful, he abides compassionate to all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given; taking only what is given, expecting only what is given, by not stealing, he abides in purity. Abandoning sexual activity, he observes celibacy, living apart, abstaining from the vulgar practice of sexual intercourse.

Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech; he speaks truth, adheres to truth, is trustworthy and reliable, one who is no deceiver of the world. Abandoning malicious speech, he abstains from malicious speech; he does not repeat elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, nor does he repeat to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus, he is one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of friendships, who enjoys concord, rejoices in concord, delights in concord, a speaker of words that promote concord. Abandoning harsh speech, he abstains from harsh speech; he speaks such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, and loveable, as go to the heart, are courteous, desired by many and agreeable to many. Abandoning gossip, he abstains from gossip; he speaks at the right time, speaks what is fact, speaks on what is good, speaks on the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the right time, he speaks such words as are worth recording, reasonable, moderate, and beneficial.

He abstains from injuring seeds and plants. He practices eating only one meal a day, abstaining from eating at night and outside the proper time. He abstains from dancing, singing, music, and theatrical shows. He abstains from wearing garlands, smartening himself with scent, and embellishing himself with unguents. He abstains from high and large seats. He abstains from accepting gold and silver. He abstains from accepting raw grain. He abstains from accepting raw meat. He abstains from accepting women and girls. He abstains from accepting male and female slaves. He abstains from accepting goats and sheep. He abstains from accepting fowl and pigs. He abstains from accepting elephants, cattle, horses, and mares. He abstains from accepting fields and land. He abstains from going on errands and running messages. He abstains from buying and selling. He abstains from false weights, false metals, and false measures. He abstains from accepting bribes, deceiving, defrauding, and trickery. He abstains from wounding, murdering, binding, thievery, plunder, and violence.

He becomes content with robes to protect his body and with alms-food to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him. Just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden, so too, the Bhikkhu becomes content with robes to protect his body and with alms-food to maintain his stomach, and wherever he goes, he sets out taking only these with him. Possessing this combination of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a bliss that is blameless.

### **Restraint of the Senses**

MN 38

On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practices the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear ... On smelling an odor with the nose ... On tasting a flavor with the tongue ... On touching a tangible with the body ... On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practices the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. Possessing this noble restraint of the faculties, he experiences within himself a bliss that is unsullied.

### **Awareness**

MN 38

He becomes one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full

awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.

Possessing this combination of noble virtue, and this noble restraint of the faculties, and possessing this noble mindfulness and full awareness, he resorts to a secluded resting place: the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.

### **Abandoning the Five Hindrances**

MN 38 On returning from his alms-round after his meal, he sits down, folding his legs crosswise, setting his body erect, and establishing mindfulness before him. Abandoning covetousness for the world, he abides with a mind free from covetousness; he purifies his mind from covetousness. Abandoning ill-will and hatred, he abides with a mind free from ill-will, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings; he purifies his mind from ill-will and hatred. Abandoning sloth and torpor, he abides free from sloth and torpor, percipient of light, mindful and fully aware; he purifies his mind from sloth and torpor. Abandoning restlessness and worry, he abides unagitated with a mind inwardly peaceful; he purifies his mind from restlessness and worry. Abandoning skeptical doubt, he abides having gone beyond skeptical doubt, unperplexed about wholesome states; he purifies his mind from skeptical doubt.

### **The Absorptions (Jhānas)**

MN 38 Having thus abandoned these five hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensory pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna, and he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna.

### **Insight**

AN 9.36 He considers whatever phenomena exist there pertaining to form, feeling, perception, volitional activities, and consciousness as impermanent, suffering, an illness, a boil, a dart, misery, affliction, alien, disintegrating, empty, and non-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena and directs it to the deathless element thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.” If he is firm in this, he attains the destruction of the taints (āsava).

### **Nibbāna**

MN 39 When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of desire for gratification of the senses, from the taint of being, and from the taint of

ignorance. When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: “It is liberated.” He understands: “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”

MN 26      My deliverance is unshakeable,  
This is my last birth,  
Now, there is no renewal of being.

For this is the supreme noble wisdom, namely, the knowledge of the destruction of all suffering.

### **A Sage at Peace**

MN 149      “I am” is a conceiving; “I am this” is a conceiving; “I shall be” is a conceiving; “I shall not be” is a conceiving; “I shall be possessed of form” is a conceiving; “I shall be formless” is a conceiving; “I shall be percipient” is a conceiving; “I shall be non-percipient” is a conceiving; “I shall be neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient” is a conceiving. Conceiving is a disease, conceiving is a tumor, conceiving is a dart. By overcoming all conceivings, one is called a sage at peace. And the sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die; he is not shaken and does not yearn. For there is nothing present in him by which he might be born. Not being born, how could he age? Not aging, how could he die? Not dying, how could he be shaken? Not being shaken, why should he yearn?

### **The True Goal**

MN 29      So this holy life does not have gain, honor, and fame for its benefit, or the attainment of virtue for its benefit, or the attainment of concentration for its benefit, or knowledge and vision for its benefit. Rather, it is the unshakeable liberation of the mind that is the goal of this holy life, its heartwood, and its end.

MN 51      Those who were Blessed Ones, accomplished and fully enlightened in the past, at most only led the Sangha of Bhikkhus to practice the right way as is done by Master Gotama now. And those who will be Blessed Ones, accomplished and fully enlightened in the future, at most will only lead the Sangha of Bhikkhus to practice the right way as is done by Master Gotama now.

DN 16      It may be that you will think: “The Teacher’s instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher!” It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher.

You should live as islands unto yourselves,  
Being your own refuge,  
With no one else as your refuge,  
With the Dhamma as an island,  
With the Dhamma as your refuge,  
With no other refuge.



For this reason, those things which I have discovered and proclaimed should be thoroughly learned by you, practiced, developed, and cultivated, so that this holy life may endure for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of devas and humans.

### **The Progressive Training (Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta)**

MN 107

Thus have I heard: On one occasion, the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra's Mother. Then, the Brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, in this Palace of Migāra's Mother, there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, down to the last step of the staircase. Among these Brahmins too, there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress, that is, in study. Among archers too, there can be seen gradual training ... that is, in archery. And also among accountants like us, who earn our living by accountancy, there can be seen gradual training ... that is, in computation. For, when we get an apprentice, first we make him count: one one, two twos, three threes, four fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens; and we make him count up to a hundred and beyond. Now, is it also possible, Master Gotama, to lay out a similar gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dhamma and Discipline of yours?"

"It is so, Brahmin," replied the Buddha. "Take the case of a clever horse trainer. He takes a thoroughbred in hand, gives him his first lesson with bit and bridle, and then proceeds with a further step. In exactly the same way, Brahmin, the Tathāgata takes in hand a man to be trained and gives him his first lesson, thus: 'Come, brother! Be kind and harmless. Live self-restrained by the restraint of the precepts. Become versed in the practice of good conduct. Seeing danger in trifling faults, undertake the training and become a pupil in the moralities.'

"As soon as he has mastered all that," Sākyamuni continued, "the Tathāgata gives him his second lesson, thus: 'Come, brother! Seeing an object with the eye, do not become captivated by its general appearance or by its details. Persist in overcoming that wretched dejection caused by craving, caused by an uncontrolled sense of sight — those evil states that could overwhelm one like a flood. Guard the sense of sight, win control over the sense of sight, and do the same with the other faculties of sense. When you hear a sound with the ear, smell an odor with the nose, taste a flavor with the tongue, or, with body, touch a tangible thing, or when, with mind, you are conscious of a thing, do not become captivated by objects of sense.'

"As soon as he has mastered all that, the Tathāgata gives him a further lesson, thus: 'Come, brother! Use moderation in eating. Do not eat thoughtlessly, do not eat for the enjoyment of it, or as a luxury, or for making your

body beautiful, but eat to keep yourself alive and in good health, free from sickness, and for strength and energy to pursue the holy life with this thought, I check my former feeling. I will allow no new feeling to arise, that maintenance and comfort may be mine.’

“Then, Brahmin, when he has won restraint in food, the Tathāgata gives him a further lesson, thus: ‘Come, brother! Abide alert. By day and night, when walking, sitting, or lying down — in everything you do — be attentive and self-possessed, and cleanse your heart from things which may hinder you.’

“Then, Brahmin, when he is devoted to alertness, the Tathāgata gives him a further lesson, thus: ‘Come, brother! Be possessed of mindfulness and self-control. In going forth and going back, have yourself under control. In looking forward or looking behind, in bending or relaxing, in wearing robes or carrying bowl and robe, in eating, chewing, tasting, in relieving yourself, in walking, standing, sitting, lying, in sleeping or waking, in speaking or keeping silence, have yourself under control.’

“Then, Brahmin, when he is possessed of mindfulness and self-control, the Tathāgata gives him a further lesson, thus: ‘Come, brother! Seek out a secluded lodging, the root of a tree in a grove, a mountain, a cave or mountain grotto, a cemetery, a forest retreat, a heap of straw in the open air.’ And he does so. And, when he has eaten his food, he sits down cross-legged, and, keeping his body straight, he proceeds to practice meditation in order to attain the absorptions.

“Now, Brahmin, for all Monks who are pupils (sekha), who have not yet attained mastery of mind, who abide aspiring for the unsurpassed security of nibbāna, such is the method for my course of training.

“But, as to those Monks who are Arahants, who have destroyed the poisons of lust, existence-infatuation, false view, and ignorance, who have lived the holy life, done their task, laid down the burden, won salvation, utterly destroyed the unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion, and are released by perfect insight — for such as those, these things are conducive to comfort in the present life and to mindful self-control as well.”



# Abbreviations

AN	=	Āṅguttara Nikāya (The Numerical Discourses)
Dhp	=	Dhammapada
DN	=	Dīgha Nikāya (The Long Discourses)
Itv	=	Itivuttaka (“As It Was Said”, Sayings of the Buddha)
MN	=	Majjhima Nikāya (The Middle-Length Discourses)
SN	=	Saṃyutta Nikāya (The Connected Discourses)
Snp	=	Suttanipāta (Early Buddhist Poems)
Ud	=	Udāna (The Inspired Utterances)
Vism	=	Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification)